

King meets head of U.S. Republican Party

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein Thursday called for peace-lovers to exert all efforts to put the peace process back on track. During a meeting at the Royal Court with head of the U.S. Republican Party and the Jewish National Coalition, Jim Nicholson, and his accompanying delegation, King Hussein said the peace process requires strenuous efforts to safeguard achievements and to resume talks in order to reach a just, comprehensive and durable peace for the region and the coming generations. Mr. Nicholson paid tribute to King Hussein's efforts and endeavours to reach a lasting and just peace in the Middle East and praised Jordan's supportive role for a peaceful settlement. Attending the audience was Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh.

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U.S. creates aid fund for Jordan

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The U.S. has set up a peace and stability fund for Jordan, using \$100 million initially earmarked for Egypt and Israel, according to a memo released Thursday by the White House. The memo from President Bill Clinton authorised the State Department to place \$50 million originally destined for Egypt in a special fund for Jordan. An equal amount was expected to be taken from funds earmarked for Israel. Israel receives \$3 billion in U.S. aid annually while Egypt gets \$2.2 billion. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright had announced the initiative June 18 to encourage Jordan's efforts to salvage the failing Middle East peace process.

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Tarawneh says Prince Hassan's fruitful talks with Mubarak resulted in closer cooperation

By Sa'eda Kilani
 Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan expressed hopes on Friday that closer Jordanian and Egyptian coordination, coupled with new American moves would help save the peace process from collapse and put Israeli-Palestinian negotiations back on track.

Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, who accompanied His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in his visit to Egypt said His Royal Highness's "fruitful and successive" talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak resulted in closer cooperation to revive the stalled peace process. Prince Hassan delivered a message from His Majesty King Hussein to President Mubarak and briefed the leader on his talks with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Prince Hassan, accompanied by Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali and Jordan's Ambassador to Cairo, Nayef Qadi, commended Egyptian efforts to revive the peace process especially at this dangerous phase in Arab-Israeli negotiations. In statements made at the airport shortly before he boarded the plane back to Amman on Thursday, the Crown Prince who met President Mubarak at the Ras Al Time presidential palace in the Mediterranean city of Alexandria, one day after a lightning visit to Israel for talks with Mr. Netanyahu said Jordan "highly values the Egyptian role as important as it is to revive the peace process, especially that the path of achieving comprehensive and lasting peace is long and arduous."

In an interview with the Jordan Times, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa pointed to the importance of Jordan's role as a neighbouring country to Israel and the Palestinians and underlined the growing cooperation between both countries in their efforts to break the deadlock in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations.

"We realise the upcoming dangers in the political arena. Our mission (Jordan and Egypt) is to revive the peace process in the framework of reaching a comprehensive peace and achieving security,"

said Mr. Musa. "There is closeness, cooperation and coordination."

Jordan, which sees its role complementary to that of Egypt, praised the Egyptian moves and expressed hopes their efforts will lead to an eventual American initiative in reviving the peace process. Dr. Tarawneh said the situation between Palestinians and Israelis directly needs third party mediation.

"Jordan and Egypt are closely coordinating their stands. There are European ideas and there is international interest (in putting the peace process back on track) but the American partner is the most qualified to take a leading role," said Dr. Tarawneh. "Diplomatic moves are becoming active recently but we hope they will lead to the announcement of an American initiative."

Dr. Tarawneh admitted that the U.S. had "other priorities" in the past than the Middle East peace process but he hoped that the American administration is now placing the region under high consideration.

"There has been a stalemate in (American efforts)," said Dr. Tarawneh, "but things are moving now and we fully encourage and support the recent statements made by U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright."

Ms. Albright announced in statements made on Wednesday at the National Press Club in Washington that she will visit the region at the end of August "provided that progress was made in security there."

Ms. Albright's visit is expected to be highly received especially after she called for Israelis and Palestinians to return to basic principles which included "a mutual commitment to security and against violence." Ms. Albright underlined the importance of achieving a just and lasting peace based on U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 including the principle of land-for-peace.

Mr. Musa, who saw in the American statements and moves "encouraging and positive signs which could unblock the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations," said Ms.



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan during talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Thursday. The two leaders conferred over ways to revive the stalled peace process in light of expected visit from U.S. peace envoy Dennis Ross (Photo by Boghos Albright's statements)

showed her correct and deep understanding of the situation between the Palestinians and Israelis."

But Jordan and Egypt, closely coordinating their efforts to get the peace process back on track, both admitted that the situation is not easy.

"The gap is still wide between the Israelis and Palestinians in matters concerning security as well as political issues," Mr. Musa told the Jordan Times. "If any initiative is to be taken (to revive the peace process), it depends on how much Israel appreciates (it)."

Both countries, who signed peace treaties with Israel, stressed that security, as important an element it may be, is not the whole and only issue that is threatening efforts to achieve comprehensive peace.

While underlining the importance of "no peace without security," Prince Hassan simultaneously stressed the need to tackle the "humanitarian" dimension and means of livelihood of the Palestinian people. "We are committed to the principle of no peace without security, but security should be understood in its comprehensive sense and not (only) the military one."

His Royal Highness hoped that Israel's economic embargo, imposed on the Palestinians after last week's double bomb attack in Jerusalem,

Hopes flourish on both sides in expectation of Ross today

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israelis and Palestinians once again pinned their hopes Friday for reviving the stalled peace negotiations on a crisis mission to the region by U.S. Middle East trouble-shooter Dennis Ross.

But the task of the American mediator was made tougher even before his arrival by a war of words between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian National Authority President Yasser Arafat and the crippling effects of Israeli sanctions on Palestinian areas.

Mr. Ross, who has not visited the region in three months, was scheduled to arrive in Israel Saturday night and immediately go into talks with Mr. Netanyahu before heading to Gaza City to meet with Mr. Arafat, officials said.

U.S. officials said his top priority would be to convince Mr. Arafat to resume security cooperation with Israel and uproot Islamists held responsible for recent terrorist violence.

Mr. Netanyahu will in turn offer to gradually lift sanctions imposed on the Palestinians last week following a double suicide bombing in Jerusalem "in accordance with the degree of Arafat's actions against Hamas and Islamic Jihad," Israel radio quoted an Israeli official as saying Friday.

But despite the hopes expressed by both Israelis and Palestinians over the new U.S. initiative, Palestinian officials insist that Washington not focus solely on security concerns but address Israel's failure to implement signed self-rule accords and Mr. Netanyahu's policy of building settlements on Arab land.

"The United States must bear its political responsibility and press the Israeli government to implement its agreements," said senior Arafat aide Nabil Abi Rudeina. "We hope for this in the visits of Ross and Albright," he said.

will see a breakthrough. But stressed that security should be comprehensive to involve all political, humanitarian and military issues.

According to Dr. Tarawneh, Mr. Netanyahu is scheduled to meet the King next week in Amman amid a flurry of diplomatic efforts to salvage

peace negotiations. The meeting is expected to take place on Wednesday, Dr. Tarawneh told the Jordan Times on Friday that reports claiming the King's change of plans (deputising the Crown Prince

(Continued on page 2)

EU concerned over 'counter-productive' Israeli measures

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Union (EU) said on Friday it would express its concern to Israel over "excessive and counter-productive" measures introduced in the wake of last month's suicide bombings in a Jerusalem market.

"The EU has decided to ask its representatives in Tel Aviv to make a demarche to [Israeli] Foreign Minister [David] Levy to make our concern known," Luxembourg Prime Minister Jacques Poos said in a letter to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

"The European Union fully shares your concern about the disastrous effect of the measures decided by the Israeli government... many of these... are new and seem to be excessive," wrote Mr. Poos, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the 15-nation EU.

Mr. Poos, replying to a plea from Mr. Arafat to intervene and block some of the Israeli measures, said the Palestinian population was being punished, although its responsibility for the Jerusalem bombings, which killed 13, had not been established.

The EU was, last month instrumental in bringing together Mr. Arafat and Mr. Levy for talks in Brussels in a bid to revive the stalled Middle East peace process, but any progress there was overshadowed by the bombings.

"The European Union will remain committed to the peace process. It will remain entirely at the disposal of both parties in order to assist them in [its] resumption," Mr. Poos said.

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Israel slightly eases blockade upon arrival of Ross; continues arrests of civilians, home demolitions and sanctions on PNA

Combined agency dispatches

ISRAEL SLIGHTLY eased its blockade of the Palestinian areas on Friday, lifting the closure of two West Bank cities and allowing some Palestinians to cross into Jordan.

The move came on the eve of visit by American peace envoy Dennis Ross to try to revive the Middle East peace talks.

Israeli troops arrested six Palestinians early Friday on suspicion of militant activity. A total of 227 Palestinians have been arrested by Israel since twin suicide bombs claimed by militants killed 15 people in a Jerusalem marketplace last week, the army said.

Palestinians can now travel in and out of Nablus and Jericho and cross the King Hussein Bridge into Jordan, though only on foot and after strict security checks, the army said.

A Palestinian official said only some Palestinians were being allowed to cross, such as those with reservations for flights from the airport in Amman, medical cases and students enrolled at universities abroad.

The other cities in the West Bank remain sealed off, as they have been since the July 30 bombing. The closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip keeps about 100,000 Palestinian workers from reaching jobs in Israel or moving freely about the West Bank.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat promised Thursday to act against violence as demanded by Israel and the U.S. as the central condition for progressing towards Palestinian self-determination.

But at the same time Mr. Arafat warned that a "huge explosion" was inevitable if Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu maintained harsh sanctions imposed on the Palestinians last week following a suicide bombing in Jerusalem.

Israeli officials refused to budge on the sanctions Thursday, saying they wanted action from Mr. Arafat, not words.

Israel also added fuel to Palestinian anger by pursuing a renewed campaign to demolish Arab homes built without Israeli permission and announcing that the 400 Jewish radicals living in the

West Bank city of Hebron could expand their settlement.

"We are determined as much as possible to pursue all aspects of security," Mr. Arafat told journalists at his Gaza City office after meeting with Israeli opposition politicians.

The Israeli army rounded up another six Palestinians in pre-dawn raids in the West Bank Friday in a continuing crackdown on Islamist groups suspected of involvement in last week's suicide bombings in Jerusalem.

An army spokeswoman said that the latest in a week of nightly raids targeted the social and political infrastructure of Hamas and the Islamic Jihad groups.

The army spokeswoman was unable to confirm how many of the 227 suspects arrested remained in jail. Thursday another army spokesman put the total number of arrests so far at 188. There was no immediate explanation for the discrepancy with Friday's figures.

Meanwhile, Israel has given up its demand for the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) to arrest Police Chief Ghazi Jabali, accused

by Israel of involvement in anti-Israeli attacks, Israeli public television said Thursday.

Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said the Israeli government is no longer demanding that General Jabali be arrested and tried, according to the television.

Israel wants the PNA to "get rid of" the police chief in "a civilised manner" for example by naming him ambassador to a foreign country, the television quoted Mr. Naveh, who is close to Mr. Netanyahu, as saying.

The U.S. initiative, unveiled in a speech by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in Washington, drew praise from both Palestinians and Israelis, but for different reasons.

Mr. Arafat said he spoke to Mr. Albright and "thanked her for her speech."

"It shows the American interest in pushing the peace process forward and out of the straits it is currently in," he said.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erakat added, "she very clearly mentioned settlement activity and confiscation of land. This is satisfactory and we hope it will translate into

policies on the ground."

Mr. Netanyahu's office expressed "satisfaction with the stress which Ms. Albright put on the primary need for security and the need for the Palestinian [National] Authority to fight terrorism."

But at the same time, Netanyahu's aides said there had been no sign of increased security cooperation and that the bulk of sanctions imposed last week would thus stay in place despite warnings from the U.S., Egypt and Jordan that they undermine Mr. Arafat to the advantage of the militants.

Israel revoked 4,000 Jerusalem IDs in 30 years

BETHLEHEM (AFP) — Israel has taken away Jerusalem residency rights from nearly 4,000 Palestinians in the past 30 years, with the highest rate of confiscations occurring in the past year, a research group said Friday.

The Alternative Information Centre (AIC), an Israeli-Palestinian research group, said it received the information from the Israeli Interior Ministry after Israel's supreme court forced the ministry to release the data.

A total of 3,863 Palestinians have had their Jerusalem identity cards confiscated, barring them from residing in the city, since Israel annexed the Arab eastern sector in 1967, according to the ministry figures, the group said.

A total of 689 identity cards were revoked in 1996, the highest number ever and seven times higher than in 1995, according to a yearly breakdown of the confiscations.

"This means 4,000 families have lost their right to live in the home city," said

Mohammad Jaradat, an AIC researcher in the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

"If we assume each family had two children, then 8,000 children became estranged from their own city by a stroke of a bureaucrat's pen," he said.

Israel revokes Jerusalem ID from Palestinians it says no longer have the city as their "life centre" or who are outside the city for more than seven years.

But Palestinians accuse Israeli officials of using the measure to reduce the Arab population in the city and they accuse Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who came to office in June 1996, of stepping up the process.

Around 150,000 Palestinians currently hold Jerusalem ID. Since occupying and annexing east Jerusalem, Israel has moved some 170,000 Jews into settlements in the area in a bid to strengthen its hold on what it calls its "unified capital."

The Palestinians want east Jerusalem as the capital of an independent state.

Egypt mufti reveals plans to space launch 'Islamic' satellite

'Satellite will determine start of Muslim months'

CAIRO (AFP) — The mufti of Egypt, Sheikh Nasr Farid Wasel, said in statements published Friday that his country planned on launching an "Islamic satellite" to determine with precision the Muslim lunar calendar.

"Studies are underway to launch in space an Egyptian Islamic satellite to determine the start of the Muslim months," Sheikh Wasel told the Egyptian government daily Al-Akhar.

"This will help put an end to disagreements which have arisen between Arab and Islamic countries over the start of the Muslim months," he said.

The start of the Islamic months such as the Holy Month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from dawn to dusk, is determined by the sighting of the new moon and often Muslim states observed different dates for the start of these months.

The Muslim month starts the day after the moon's crescent is seen with the naked eye.

Sheikh Wasel said the satellite would transmit to

earth pictures which would be used to determine without doubt the new moon, which otherwise is often difficult to see because of "natural obstacles" such as clouds.

The mufti, who is entrusted by the government to issue religious decrees and set the start of Muslim months, said he hoped the new satellite would be launched before Ramadan which should start this year around Dec. 31.

"Appeals for donations to help launch this project will be made soon," Sheikh Wasel said.

A professor at Cairo university who has been asked by Sheikh Wasel to undertake a feasibility study and research the project said the satellite "should not cost more than \$2 million."

"The cost of launching it from a country which has the necessary technology will also be very reasonable," Professor Mirvat Awad told Al-Akhar.

Egypt is expected to launch its first information and telecommunication satellite, NileSat, next year with the help of France.



SOME FOOD AND MEDICINE ARRIVE: Palestinians load bags of flour from an Israeli truck at the crossing into the Gaza Strip Friday. Israel permitted 20 trucks loaded with food and medicines to enter the self-rule territory as a humanitarian gesture aimed at easing the restrictions imposed after the double suicide bombing in a west Jerusalem market last week (Reuters photo)

Israeli soldier on shooting spree to stand trial

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli soldier who opened fire on a Palestinian market-place in January, wounding four people, will be brought to trial this year despite an earlier ruling that he was mentally unfit, the army said Friday.

A new panel of psychiatrists has examined Noam Friedman and found him fit to stand trial, the army spokesman's office confirmed.

Mr. Friedman, 22, then a corporal in the Israeli army, opened fire Jan. 1 on the Arab market in the West Bank city of Hebron, firing 15 rounds before he was overpowered by an Israeli officer.

After the attack, Mr. Friedman told investigators he intended to kill as many Arabs as possible to prevent Israel and the Palestinians from reaching agreement on an Israeli troop withdrawal from Hebron. The withdrawal from 80 per cent of Hebron went ahead in March.

Army psychiatrists ruled that Mr. Friedman was insane at the time of the shooting and was unfit to stand trial. He was committed to a civilian psychiatric hospital in Jerusalem.

But last month, officials confirmed that Mr. Friedman was being allowed out of the hospital to attend university classes and to visit his home in the West Bank settlement of Maale Adumim. Palestinians were infuriated by the lenient treatment.

Israelis support both peace process and sanctions — poll

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Most Israelis want a resumption of the peace process with the Palestinians while approving tough sanctions imposed on the Palestinian areas after the Jerusalem suicide bombing, according to a poll published Friday.

Two-thirds of those questioned for the poll, published by the Yediot Achronot newspaper, said they supported the peace process while 32 per cent were against and two per cent voiced no opinion.

Yet 77 per cent also said the security closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip imposed after last week's bomb attack should continue. Twenty-six per cent said it should be lifted, and the rest were undecided.

Israel sealed off the territories, blockaded Palestinian-ruled towns on the West Bank and froze the transfer of \$40 million in tax revenue owed to the Palestinian National Authority after 13 Israelis were killed in a July 30 suicide attack on a

Jerusalem market.

It says the sanctions will only be lifted once Palestinian President Yasser Arafat takes clear action against Islamists opposed to the peace process.

Mr. Arafat has described the sanctions as a declaration of war against his people and warned Thursday of a "huge explosion" in the territories if they continue.

The Yediot poll questioned 500 people and had a margin of error of four per cent.

Hizbollah slams Lebanon crackdown on dissent

BEIRUT (Reuters) — Lebanon's pro-Iranian Hizbollah said on Friday it would not tolerate a government plan to deploy extra troops in parts of Lebanon as part of a crackdown on civil disobedience.

"The decision to treat these areas as military zones in a state of emergency is a very dangerous decision which we would never accept and we say with full confidence this is rejected," said Hizbollah Secretary-General Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah.

"The decision itself is humiliating and we refuse this insult and humiliation," he told a news conference.

The government has decided to deploy army and security forces in the Bekaa Valley and Beirut's Shiite southern suburbs to quell a civil disobedience campaign led by former Hizbollah leader Sheikh Subhi Tufayli. Newspapers said on Friday.

Parts of the Bekaa Valley and the capital's Shiite southern suburbs are strongholds of the Islamist Hizbollah (party of God).

Asked how Hizbollah would react if the government decided to prosecute Tufayli and deployed extra troops, Sheikh Nasrallah said: "This will not happen anyway."

"Those who made the insult should apologise to the people of the suburbs and the Bekaa," he said.

Sheikh Nasrallah said the plan to tighten security was part of a deal the government made with Washington tied to the recent U.S. decision to lift a 10-year-old ban on its citizens travelling to Lebanon.

The cabinet on Wednesday decided to take tough measures against Sheikh Tufayli's "hunger revolt" after an unlicensed radio station he runs threatened

reprisals against any prosecution.

President Elias Hrawi read a security report to the cabinet stating that the radio station had been calling on its followers to defy the government. He said the broadcast threatened that thousands of would-be martyrs were ready for revenge and warned of a "sea of blood."

Sheikh Nasrallah on Friday called on Sheikh Tufayli to ease his campaign to avoid giving the government the opportunity to deploy troops in the Bekaa Valley and Beirut's southern suburbs.

"We call on our brother Sheikh Tufayli to take the initiative and deny the government this pretext which the authorities want to use to carry out their dubious plans," he said. He and other Hizbollah leaders have backed Sheikh Tufayli's demands on the government to ease poverty.

Saudi Arabia executes Indian drug trafficker

RIYADH (AFP) — An Indian drug trafficker was beheaded Friday in the western Saudi city of Jeddah, raising to 75 the number of executions announced in the Gulf kingdom this year. An interior ministry statement, carried by the official news agency SPA, said that Mohammad Ali Hassani was sentenced to death for trying to bring heroin into the country. Drug traffickers, dealers and addicts face the death penalty in Saudi Arabia under its strict version of Islamic law. The same penalty is also applied to those convicted of murder, rape and armed robbery. Since the beginning of July, six Pakistanis, three Chad nationals and an Afghan have been beheaded for drug trafficking. The newspaper Okaz reported Thursday that Saudi police confiscated 255 kilograms of narcotics brought into the kingdom in a car stolen by a foreigner who was staying in the country illegally. A record 191 people were executed in Saudi Arabia in 1995.

Crown Prince's visit to Cairo

(Continued from page 1) in last Wednesday's visit to west Jerusalem and Cairo were baseless. "It was not originally planned that the King would make the visits. These are Israeli media claims."

The Israeli daily Jerusalem Report said in its Wednesday edition that the King was expected to make the visit to Israel but in a "last minute" change of plans, the prime minister's office was told that the Crown Prince and the prime minister were coming in his stead.

In a joint press conference, Egyptian and Jordanian foreign ministers denounced the collective punitive measures imposed by Israel on Palestinian areas following last week's Jerusalem bomb attack which killed 13 people on July 30. After the market attack, Israel halted peace talks with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) and sealed off the West Bank and Gaza stopping trade and keeping thousands of Palestinians from jobs in Israel.

"Punitive measures are unacceptable. It is time to revive the peace process," he said.

Mr. Musa said, but "I can't report on anything significant in the peace process."

The Egyptian foreign minister who welcomed and saw off the Crown Prince told the Jordan Times that commitment to peace should be there for security "to have a meaning."

"We cannot put the whole blame on Palestinian President Yasser Arafat," Mr. Musa said, "violence should be stopped but settlements also provoke people."

Dr. Tarawneh echoed the same sentiments on the present deadlock in the peace process though he declined to comment on whether Jordan felt seriousness in Israel's position towards putting the peace process back on track.

"Palestinians and Israelis are partners to peace. If they have a common feeling of commitment to peace, then diplomatic moves will succeed," he told the Jordan Times.

"We don't expect that the issue be tackled in one visit or two. We don't expect instant results. The situation is serious and has to be addressed," he said.

Rockets hit north Israel after bombardment

(Continued from page 1) threatened to rocket northern Israel in retaliation.

"Katyusha rockets which landed in the Israeli-occupied zone on Wednesday can also go further than the Lebanese border" with Israel, Hizbollah MP Ammar Mussawi had warned, seemingly making true on his promise.

It was the second day in a row on Friday that rockets fell inside Israel amid widening battles between the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah guerrillas and Israeli forces and their militia allies in south Lebanon.

Worshippers at the Gates of Heaven Synagogue had a narrow escape when a rocket hit the roof of the building as they were at morning prayers.

"We opened our eyes and saw the hole in the ceiling and (smelled) the cordite," Abraham Edri told army radio.

None of the congregation was hurt, but a woman living nearby was injured by flying glass. "I was asleep in my bed and I woke up and saw what had fallen on me. I shouted for help," Mazal

Zabba told Israel Radio.

A second rocket fell in an open space, causing no injuries.

Lebanese security officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the rockets were launched from Tebne, just north of the zone occupied by Israel in south Lebanon.

The army ordered residents into the bomb shelters, but after about four hours they came out and life in the city returned to normal.

A spokesman at Hizbollah's press office said the group had nothing to do with the bombardment.

However an Israeli security official said Hizbollah is lying. "We know they fired the rockets," he told the Associated Press.

Hizbollah is the dominant guerrilla group in southern Lebanon, accounting for most of the attacks against Israeli forces in the area.

Israel Radio reported that the civilian population of northern Israel is putting strong pressure on the government and the army to take tough retaliatory action against the Hizbollah.

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel. 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
14:10	Twinkle
14:30	Wishbone
15:00	Blue Heelers
15:30	World Of Geo
16:00	The Valley between
16:30	Tilt
17:00	French programmes
19:00	Le Journal
19:30	News headlines
19:35	Neighbours
20:00	Comedy — Ties that Bind
20:30	Prison
21:10	Time Trax
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature film
23:59	Ellen

PRAYER TIMES	
04:25	Fajr
05:51	(Sunrise) Dhuha
12:41	Dhuhr
16:21	Asr
19:32	Maghreb
20:58	Isha

CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church	Sweetfield, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church	Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church	Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation	Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church	Tel. 661656
Terra Sancta Church	Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

622366	Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
623826	Anglican Church Tel. 623826
771331	Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
775261	Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
771751	St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
5516245	Amman International Church Tel. 5516245
824328	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328
654932	German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457
654932	The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932
675691	Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691
811295	The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295
614190	English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190

WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
Relative warm weather conditions will prevail with winds northwesterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly	
moderate to active and seas calm.	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim	885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab	602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhtaseb	875748
Dr. Jamal Ibarah	847351
Firas pharmacy	661912
Ferdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asema pharmacy	637055
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shweisani pharmacy	637660
Najib pharmacy	847632
IRBID:	
Dr. Mazin Abu Bakir	276852
Al Ouds pharmacy	(—)
ZARQA:	

637111	Food Control Centre
661111	Civil Defence Department
661111	Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
630341	Civil Defence Emergency
199	Rescue Police 192
621111	637777
617101	Fire Brigade
775121	Blood Bank
843402	Highway Police
896390	Traffic Police
630321	Public Security Department
605800	Hotel Complaints
661176	Price Complaints
669131	Water and Sewerage Complaints
897467	Amman Municipality Complaints
787111	Telephone Information (directory assistance)
010230	Overseas Calls
623101	Central Amman Telephone Repairs
661101	Abdali Telephone Repairs
773111	Jordan Television
774111	Radio Jordan
680100	Water Authority

991772	Dr. Ya'qoub Al Khatib
985417	Khalifeh pharmacy
EMERGENCIES	
637111	Food Control Centre
661111	Civil Defence Department
661111	Civil Defence Immediate Rescue
630341	Civil Defence Emergency
199	Rescue Police 192
621111	637777
617101	Fire Brigade
775121	Blood Bank
843402	Highway Police
896390	Traffic Police
630321	Public Security Department
605800	Hotel Complaints
661176	Price Complaints
669131	Water and Sewerage Complaints
897467	Amman Municipality Complaints
787111	Telephone Information (directory assistance)
010230	Overseas Calls
623101	Central Amman Telephone Repairs
661101	Abdali Telephone Repairs
773111	Jordan Television
774111	Radio Jordan
680100	Water Authority

815615	Jordan Electricity Authority
636381	Electric Power Company
08-53200	RJ Flight Information
08-53200	Queen Alia Intl. Airport
08-53200	IRBID:
02275555	Princess Basma Hospital
02272275	Greek Catholic Hospital
02272100	Ibn Al Nafees Hospital
03131411	AQABA:
03131411	Princess Haya Hospital

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalidi Maternity, J. Amn	644281/6
Akileh Maternity, J. Amn.	642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Maitas, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmeisani	669131
Shmeisani Hospital	845845
Al-Muasher Hospital	667227/9
The Islamic, Abdali	666126/7
Al-Ah	

Princess reviews population programmes

AMMAN (J.T.) — HRH Princess Basma Thursday met with United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA) Representative in Jordan Ali Ugur Tuncer to review the fund's programmes as well as its work with the National Population Commission (NPC).

Princess Basma and Mr. Tuncer analysed a number of projects on which the two groups have been collaborating as well as those in various stages of implementation, such as the Kingdom's national population strategy, UNFPA assistance in reproductive health and environmental safety programmes.

The UNFPA has been cooperating with the NPC to amend the national population strategy in the light of the 1994 general census results and other relevant surveys and studies, according to a Queen Alia Fund for Social Development (QAF) statement.

The Princess covered future cooperation between the UNFPA and the NPC in order to support national development and cater to the needs of various populations in the Kingdom, the statement said.



HRH Princess Basma Thursday meets with Dr. Muneera Salem-Murdoch to discuss small income-generating projects for women and means of helping women improve the socio-economic conditions of Jordanian families (Petra photo)

In 1988, the government, upon the initiative of Princess Basma, created the National Population Commission to serve as a specialised institution charged with population issues and the implementation of a national population strategy, according to the statement.

Commission prepared the national population strategy which was approved last year, the statement said.

Also Thursday, the Princess met with Deputy Director at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Dr. Muneera Salem-Murdoch, and the two discussed small

income-generating projects for women and means of helping women improve the socio-economic conditions of Jordanian families.

The meeting was attended by acting Vice President and Director of Economic Analysis at the International Centre for Research on Women at USAID Dr. Rekha Mehra.

Ministry to secure funds for future water projects

AMMAN (Petra) — The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is currently preparing a programme that Jordan might secure an additional 500 million cubic metres (mcm) of water over the next 13 years, at the estimated cost of JD 3.5 million, according to Ministry Assistant Secretary General Hazem Nasser Friday.

According to Dr. Nasser, the ministry will soon contact potential financiers to secure necessary funds for the project which, he stated, is to achieve completion in 2010.

In addition to securing new water resources, the project also entails sewage schemes, recycling treated

water, restructuring water networks, and constructing dams on the Yarmouk and Jordan Rivers, he maintained.

It also entails the restructuring of current plans for the development of the Southern Jordan Valley region, drawing water from the Disi Basin to Amman, boosting the water pipeline, which currently draws water from Deir Alla in the Jordan Valley to Amman, as well as 50 smaller water-related projects, Dr. Nasser confirmed.

However, he admonished that, despite huge investments in these projects, Jordan will continue to face an annual shortage of at least 250 mcm of water by

the year 2010, as the Kingdom's population is estimated to rise to seven million at that time, if current population growth trends continue.

These trends demonstrate an annual 3.4 per cent increase in the population growth, according to Dr. Nasser.

Population growth remains the most serious element in regards to securing sufficient water resources for the country, he said, and thus requires further efforts to procure water resources.

Currently, Jordan's annual water consumption stands at a 240 mcm for domestic purposes, 30 million mcm for industrial

purposes and 610 mcm for agriculture, according to Dr. Nasser.

While water resources remain unchanged, the population increases gradually, and hence there is a vital need for further investments in the water sector, he added.

Dr. Nasser estimated that an investment of JD 2.5 to JD 3 will be needed to secure an additional single cubic metre of water over the next few years.

The construction of new dams, improvements to irrigation systems and recycling of treated water are all obligatory steps if increases in farming are to be maintained, he concluded.

'Man expected to be charged with daughter's attempted murder'

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The criminal prosecutor will today question a 65-year-old man who, assisted by his four sons, reportedly opened fire on his divorced daughter Wednesday in his Wihdat home, officials said Friday.

The woman was critically injured, they added. The father, identified only as S. N., shot his 37-year-old daughter, identified as B., 10 times from two guns, shortly after she was released from administrative detention for "immoral behaviour," according to the official source.

He was aided by two of his sons, the official added. The source, speaking on condition of anonymity, told the Jordan Times Friday that the woman, who has been divorced for the past three years, was allegedly "involved in several immoral relations and was admitted to prison several times in relation to the same."

Last Wednesday at noon, the source maintained, the woman's cousin signed a guarantee to the Marj Al Hamam governor, that the woman would not be harmed, and escorted her to his house.

"The father was appraised of the situation, went to the cousin's house, and then took his daughter to his Wihdat house," the source said, adding that the woman, "knowing she might be killed, managed to call the police before leaving with her father."

When the police reached the house, S.N. warned the officers not to approach, then began shooting at his daughter with the help of his sons who were refilling the two guns for him," the source said.

The suspect's other two sons barricaded the door, he added.

Upon hearing the gunshots, the police forcibly entered the room and overpowered the father, who was still shooting at his daughter, the official stated.

He added that 20 shots were fired at B., and she was struck by 10.

"Miraculously, none of the 10 bullets wounded her fatal-

ly, and the woman is currently being treated at Al Bashir Hospital," he affirmed. "She has been listed in stable condition."

According to the official, the suspect told police that he decided to kill his daughter "as she tarnished my family's image, and I wanted to cleanse my honour."

Criminal Prosecutor Imad Kilani, who is handling the case, is expected to press charges of attempted murder against the five men, the official source stated.

Fifteen women have been killed in Jordan in reported "crimes of honour," since the beginning of the year.

In other incidents in the Kingdom, a 45-year-old Egyptian national was killed Friday in Sahab when dynamite exploded in his hands, a Civil Defence Department (CDD) official said.

Ibrahim Abdullah was planting dynamite in some rocks in the Beida area of Sahab, when it accidentally detonated, the CDD official told the Jordan Times.

Meanwhile, two people, including a four-month-old child, were killed Friday and 16 others were injured, four of them critically, in two separate road accidents in Karak and Mafrak, a CDD official said.

In Mafrak, two people were killed, and 12 more were injured in a road collision, which involved a trailer and a public bus, on the Amman-Mafrak Highway, the CDD official said.

One of the deceased persons was identified as Salem Iyad Harahsheh, 60. Officials were unable to identify the other victim, however, affirmed that he was an infant of four months.

The injured persons were taken to Mafrak Government Hospital by CDD rescue teams and listed in fair condition, according to the official.

In the Qatameh area of Karak, four people were listed in critical condition after their car struck a trailer, he stated.

The victims, between 20 and 25 years of age, are being treated at Karak Government Hospital, the official maintained.

Hashd denies allegations of inciting boycott

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan People's Democratic Party (Hashd) has denied a Ministry of Interior allegation that the group has been inciting political groups to boycott the 1997 parliamentary elections.

The party described its actions as consistent with the framework of the Constitution and in conformity with Jordanian legislation. In a letter to Minister of Interior Nafith Rashid, dated August 6, Hashd Secretary General Salem Nahhas maintained that his party rejects accusations levelled by the minister.

"We do not consider that we have committed any violation," he said. Mr. Rashid had sent a letter to the Hashd secretary general, dated July 31, accusing the party of

encouraging other parties to follow Hashd's decision to boycott the 1997 elections, to be held Nov. 4.

"It has been ascertained that your political party has instigated other parties to boycott the parliamentary elections, an action which clearly contravenes Article 66 of the 1986 Parliamentary Electoral Law and its amendments," the minister asserted.

The letter requested that Hashd permanently desist from further violations of a similar nature.

Mr. Nahhas denied that the party committed any violation of said law and buttressed his assertion with the following arguments:

• Article 15 of the Constitution clearly states that "the state guarantees freedom of opinion for every

Jordanian to express his or her verbal or written views within the framework of the law."

"The United Nations International Document on Social and Political Rights stipulates that no law be enacted in a manner such that would deprive individuals or groups of their basic rights, including the right of free expression."

• Article 3 of the Political Parties Law provides for party participation in political life... our decision to boycott the elections is part of our participation in political life.

• Dialogue and exchange of views among the leadership of any given parties cannot be considered incitement of any kind.

The Islamic Action

Front, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Jordan Arab Constitutional Front, the National Action Front, Al Ansar, Hashd and Al Mustakbal have all declared their intention to boycott parliamentary elections this year.

On July 28, the 11 opposition parties convened but failed to take a final decision regarding a collective boycott of the upcoming elections as five were in favour and six opposed to the proposition.

A spokesman for the 11 parties later stated that the group postponed taking a final decision to give both the government and opposition parties more time to study the other's conditions and stands.

Court orders release of man accused of stabbing Israeli

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Criminal Court Thursday ordered the release of a 21-year-old man who, in April, stabbed and slightly wounded an Israeli woman in the Um Qais tourist area.

Hamzeh Ghareibeh, was charged with the attempted murder of Roline B. Golan, 30, an Israeli tourist visiting the area. She was travelling in a group of 33 persons, on a

four-day visit to the Kingdom.

The tribunal Thursday amended the charges pressed against Mr. Ghareibeh to those of a misdemeanour, "based on a medical report which stated that the woman received minor injuries only."

"As the medical report determined that Ms. Golan's injuries required less than 10 days convalescence, and as she dropped charges against Mr. Ghareibeh, we decided to

amend the charges and sentence Mr. Ghareibeh to a prison term of one-month for possession of a deadly weapon, the court said. "As Mr. Ghareibeh has already served the requisite period, we order his immediate release."

Several of Mr. Ghareibeh's relatives who attended the court session applauded upon hearing the court's decision.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, Ms. Golan remained alone while the rest of her

accompanying group visited the rest house. The defendant approached the woman, stabbed her once in the stomach, and fled the scene.

He was arrested the same evening by police, according to court transcripts.

Ms. Golan was treated for minor injuries and released the same day. The tribunal was headed by Justice Abdul Ruhman Tawfiq and included Justices Mifleh Mubeidin and Marwan Dabbas.

WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

- * Musical performance by the Montreal Baroque Orchestra at the North Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- * Concert by Lebanese artist Nawal Al Zu'bi at the South Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- * Jordanian play "Fardhood son of Robin Hood" at Artemis Steps at 8:30 p.m.
- * Musical performance by National Irbid University band at the Sound and Light Theatre at 8:30 p.m.
- * Play entitled "Five Dolls and a Woman" (to be followed by a musical performance by Ahmad Al Falih and his band) at Gracia Theatre at 8:00 p.m.
- * Musical performance by Egyptian Tanbourah band and other Jordanian bands as well as an Egyptian circus show at the main square at 7:00 p.m.
- * Display of handicrafts and sculptures at Zeus Vault.

CONCERT

- * Musical performance by The Family International at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITION

- * Photography exhibition by Claudia Pedotti at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 647858) until Aug. 16.

'Baby-friendly' philosophy gains ground in Jordan

By Hind-Lara Mango
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Al Bashir Hospital was the first to be certified baby-friendly in Jordan. The Princess Rahmah and Princess Badea hospitals in Irbid have since followed suit and also adopted the baby-friendly philosophy.

The baby-friendly concept was initiated by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organisation in 1989. "This is an international initiative aimed at encouraging hospitals to support breastfeeding," according to UNICEF Area Representative Dorrit Alopaeus-Stahl. "UNICEF has been working [diligently] to ensure that major hospitals in Jordan are certified as baby-friendly."

She told the Jordan Times that hospitals must adopt ten steps in order to receive certification. These steps cover breastfeeding, staff training, mother-child proximity, and enabling a mother to feed upon her baby's demand.

Ms. Stahl believes that breastfeeding is not decreasing in Jordan. However, as the Kingdom undergoes modernisation, bottle-feeding has come to symbolise a contemporary method of infant feeding, and is hence appropriated by new mothers.

Hospitals offer mothers free samples of infant formulas and routinely separate mother and baby at birth, she added.

A baby might be fed liquids and formula before the mother has even had the chance to breastfeed — a practice which further complicates breastfeeding. Ms.

Stahl stated.

Therefore, a scientific committee of paediatricians, nurses and consultants was formed, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and UNICEF, to ensure that the baby-friendly concept is implemented properly in Jordan, she explained.

"We started with big government hospitals as the majority of mothers deliver there," Ms. Stahl asserted. "Once the advantages of breastfeeding are known to new mothers, they will begin to demand to breastfeed."

"We hope that private hospitals will realise that the baby-friendly certification is advantageous for them," she added.

UNICEF bestowed the baby-friendly award on Al Bashir Hospital as Jordan marked World Breastfeeding Week.

UNICEF commended Al Bashir Hospital on the initiatives it has taken to achieve baby-friendly status.

"Al Bashir Hospital now maintains a trained staff to apply ten steps to successful breastfeeding," explained Assistant Director of the Paediatrics Unit at Al Bashir Hospital Dr. Mustafa Falah. "These steps encourage mothers to continue breastfeeding the first six hours following the baby's birth."

As the hospital follows baby-friendly policies, it thus advises mothers to avoid the provision of infant formula during their baby's first four months.

The baby-friendly initiative advocates the idea of feeding upon demand, and not according to a set pattern or routine as this stimulates

lactation.

In addition, mothers are advised to eat fresh food and drink liquids to increase production of breast milk.

According to Dr. Falah, Al Bashir Hospital "promotes rooming-in, whereby the baby is kept with the mother during her stay at hospital and fed upon demand."

"Mothers are advised to breast-feed as long as possible and ideally for a period of two years," he stated.

Breast milk is considered the best food for a healthy start in life. Although infant formula is being created to resemble breast milk in its fat and protein content, breast milk contains antibodies which protect the baby against diseases such as polio and influenza. "Formula cannot create the bond established between mother and child during the nursing process," Dr. Falah emphasised.

UNICEF encourages all hospitals in Jordan to provide mothers with support to breastfeed. The fund's stated objective is that, as this philosophy becomes part of every hospital programme, preventive health care will become a natural part of hospital programmes.

Article 24 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child recognises a child's right to enjoy the highest attainable standard of health. To enjoy this right, all segments of society, particularly parents and children, should be informed and have access to education and support in the usage of basic knowledge of child health, nutrition and the advantages of breast feeding, according to UNICEF.

Cambodian leader says ousted prince faces charges

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodian leader Hun Sen said in a letter to the U.N. secretary-general that Prince Norodom Ranariddh, the co-premier he ousted in early July, was free to return to Cambodia but would have to face charges in court.

Mr. Hun Sen also asked Kofi Annan to help in coordinating international observers for Cambodia's next election in May.

"Prince Norodom Ranariddh can still return to Cambodia but he must clear himself in court of the accusations of illegally importing weapons and illegal negotiations with the outlawed Khmer Rouge (guerrilla group)," Mr. Hun Sen said in the letter, which was read over government radio Friday.

Mr. Hun Sen ousted Prince Ranariddh on July 6 after two days of fighting in the Cambodian capital. The prince was not in the country at the time and has since

dismissed the accusations against him and called for opposition to Mr. Hun Sen. After overthrowing the prince, Mr. Hun Sen said he wanted to maintain the coalition government with the prince's royalist party and hold elections as scheduled in May.

Mr. Hun Sen has said he does not want a large-scale electoral mission similar to that which oversaw a 1993 poll that Prince Ranariddh won, but he said he would accept some international observers coordinated by the United Nations. "I would like to thank your excellency ... to complete the duty of coordinating international observers in the period of the election," Mr. Hun Sen said in the letter.

Cambodian Foreign Minister Ung Huot was formally appointed first prime minister Thursday, replacing Prince Ranariddh after King Norodom Sihanouk, the prince's father, dropped his opposition to the move.

The United States Thursday said it would deal with Mr. Ung Huot, who will maintain his post as foreign minister, even though it considered the process of his selection undemocratic.

More than two-thirds of Cambodia's National Assembly members voted Wednesday by secret ballot to accept Mr. Ung Huot's nomination but an official at the U.S. embassy in Phnom Penh said given the climate of intimidation following Mr. Hun Sen's coup, the vote could not be considered democratic.

"We'll be meeting with him in order to do business with the government of Cambodia ... But we do not believe that he was chosen democratically," U.S. State Department spokesman James Rubin told a news briefing in Washington.

After the coup, the United States suspended aid to Cambodia for 30 days while it assessed the situation and Mr. Hun Sen's pledge to

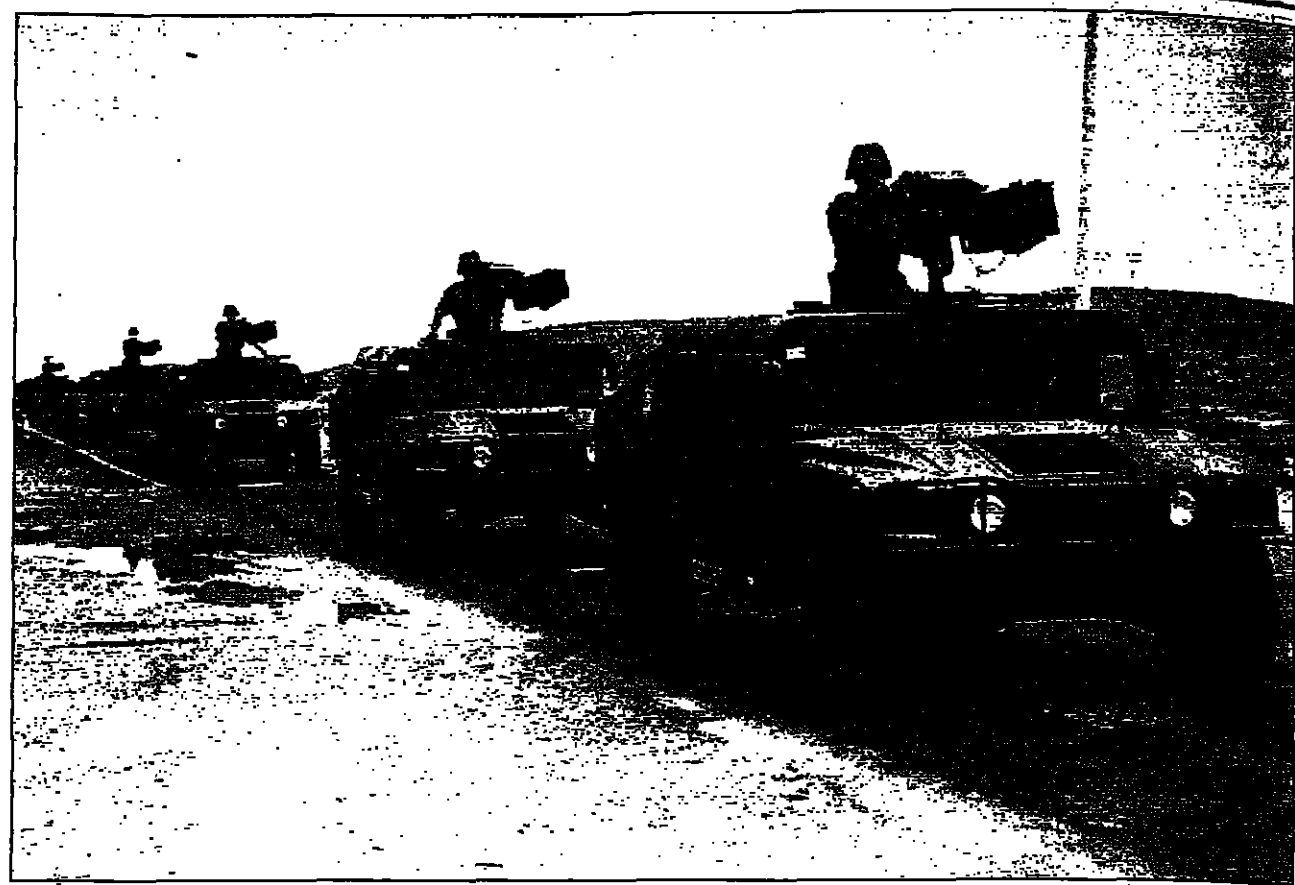
comply with the 1991 Paris Accords that ended Cambodia's civil war. That period expires this weekend.

"I wouldn't expect any significant changes in how we've approached it (aid), and that is that we will not provide funds to go through the government of Cambodia," Mr. Rubin said.

Khmer Rouge Guerrilla Radio, which went off the air without explanation Thursday, said in a Friday broadcast that everything Mr. Hun Sen had done since the coup, in terms of political and military organisation, must be cancelled.

The radio condemned Mr. Hun Sen and said guerrillas still regarded Prince Ranariddh as Cambodia's legal first prime minister.

The guerrillas purged their notorious leader Pol Pot late last month after he opposed an alliance with Prince Ranariddh and his royalist party. More than one million people died during the 1975-79 Khmer Rouge rule.



A column of Mexican army Humvees with high caliber machine guns mounted on their roofs patrol near the border town of Ciudad Juarez. The Mexican army has taken over the majority of the anti-drug effort and regularly patrol this violent stretch of territory which is the preferred launching pad for narcotics smuggling into the U.S. (Reuters photo)

Drug cartels wage war on Mexico-U.S. border

CIUDAD JUAREZ (R) — Drug-related killings have escalated on the U.S.-Mexican border, signalling the end of a code of honour among Mexican druglords to keep their turf battles in the shadows.

Mexican and U.S. officials said drug violence took a new turn this week when two slickly-dressed hitmen sauntered into an elegant steakhouse in this border city near El Paso, Texas, and cut down six people in a burst of automatic gunfire.

Amado Carrillo Fuentes, head of the so-called Juarez Cartel whose death last month has sparked the vicious turf war, owned the Maxfin Restaurant where the massacre occurred, a U.S. anti-narcotics official said.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said the hit Sunday night, as diners rounded off a day watching bull fighting across the road, was linked to a bitter struggle for control of the multi-billion dollar cocaine trade.

"Of course it's related to the Carrillo Fuentes drug wars," the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) official said.

The gangster-style killing — the gunmen pumped 150 rounds from AK-47 assault rifles into their victims before fleeing in a black limousine — followed more than 12 reported drug-related "executions" in Juarez since Carrillo's death on July 4.

Three men, including one local policeman, were arrested early Thursday with AK-47s that appeared to be the same as those used in the shooting, police spokesman Ernesto Garcia said. He said they would be charged in the shooting.

He named the suspects as policeman Jorge Perez, Jesus Barvill and Pedro Cardero. But he said authorities still lacked a motive.

The attack was particularly horrifying to citizens of Juarez because five of the six victims appeared to be unconnected to drugs smuggling — caught in the crossfire of a war that had been kept within the confines of the underworld.

"This is now no man's land, a land of the strong. And the strong are the narco," said Antonio Ochoa, a mourner at the funeral of Teresa Herrera, 26, one of the victims who was buried Wednesday. "This is not going to stop."

Newspapers in Juarez demanded an end to the violence, and the city's main business organisations this week ordered a halt to any voluntary contributions to government projects until security in the city was beefed up.

"Like Chicago in the prohibition years, since last Sunday this border zone abandoned its old position as a trampoline for drug trafficking and became the new battle ground for drug mafias," El Diario De Juarez said in a front-page editorial.

Elsewhere in Mexico, Carrillo's demise has had similarly bloody consequences. An ex-beauty queen, Irma Ibarra, was gunned down in the western city of Guadalajara last week after she received threats from Carrillo's former inner circle.

Until his death after a plastic surgery operation in Mexico City, experts say Carrillo had sought to keep inter-cartel bloodshed quiet, organising a "federation" of top cartel bosses to map out and divide up territories.

Now he is out of the picture, officials say the race is unravelling. In Juarez, so many bodies have turned up in car boots and vacant desert lots recently that police talking by radio now use a special code number for executions, 85.

The mafia-style Maxfin massacre was not Carrillo style, and officials were investigating whether a more violent band of druglords, the Tijuana-based Arellano Felix brothers, may be muscling into his former territory.

"The cartels all work together except the (Arellano Felix) brothers. They don't get along with anyone," the DEA official said.

Authorities said the target of the Maxfin killings was Alfonso Corral Olaguez, 36, also known as "Green Feet" because of the green crocodile-skin cowboy boots he used to wear.

Mexican officials were investigating his links to Jaime Herrera, head of a local cartel operating in the Mexican state of Durango that apparently has close ties with the Juarez cartel. There were also reports Corral was a DEA informant.

16 die in Kashmir ahead of Indian Independence Day

SRINAGAR (AFP) — Three soldiers and 13 Muslim separatists were killed in fighting in Kashmir Thursday as security forces stepped up operations ahead of India's Independence Day, police said Friday.

Five militants and two Indian soldiers died following a six-hour gun battle on the outskirts of Srinagar, the summer capital of Kashmir, officials said.

The incident began when troops ringed a militant hideout. The rebels killed two soldiers and injured another with rockets and grenades before the army shot dead five militants.

Five other guerrillas and a

soldier were killed in another gun battle at a village around 30 kilometres north of Srinagar. No further details were available.

The army also killed three Muslim militants near Kashmir's disputed border with Pakistan, the police said. The militants were reportedly trying to cross into the Himalayan state from Pakistan.

Security forces have stepped up their campaign against Muslim separatist guerrillas in the disputed state ahead of the 50th year of Indian independence on August 15.

Indian Independence Day is traditionally marked in

Kashmir by protest strikes and shows of strength by Muslim guerrillas. They have been fighting to end Indian rule in the territory since 1989. The campaign has claimed more than 20,000 lives.

The militants, however, celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day on Aug. 14 by hoisting Pakistani national flags and firing in the air.

India and Pakistan dispute the ownership of Kashmir which is divided between the two neighbours. New Delhi accuses Islamabad of arming guerrillas in its territory, an allegation denied by Pakistan.

Chinese army in drive for better logistics

BEIJING (R) — China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) will target elite units in a drive to improve logistics equipment and facilities in the nation's rapidly modernising armed forces, the China Daily said Friday.

Since 1991, the PLA had developed more than 400 types of logistics equipment in areas such as communications, fuel supply, transportation and surgical treatment, it quoted Wang Xiangwen of the science, technology and equipment division of the PLA's General Logistics Department as saying.

"China... is ready to use them in equipping crack troops," the newspaper said.

It was important to improve the efficiency and capability of logistics equipment because of the large amount of supplies needed to fight modern wars, it quote Mr. Wang as saying.

"The development of logistics equipment should go side by side with the development of weapons," he said.

As Oder drops, Polish border town faces new problem

WARSAW (R) — As the Polish border town of Slubice hailed a victory over the swollen river Oder Thursday, the falling flood-water levels exposed a brand new problem — the big clean up.

As the governor of Slubice, on the border with Germany, announced that the evacuated citizens could return to their homes Friday, the inhabitants who had returned early were confronted with an almighty mess.

Streets were wrecked, buildings uprooted, rubbish and mud lay strewn all over the place, and swarms of insects buzzed around the rotting carcasses of animals drowned in the worst floods Poland had seen for centuries.

Heavy rains in early July caused floods that killed 54, inundated a total of 6,600

square kilometres, forced tens of thousands out of their homes and caused billions of dollars-worth of damage.

Nearly 1,700 square kilometres of land was still under water Thursday and over 30,000 people had yet to go home, but the floodwaters were receding.

Although Slubice escaped the worst of the inundation, Ms. Cudak said the high levels of ground water had left all the cellars in the city flooded and caused the town's sewage system to overflow.

"It is too early to start pumping out the water from the cellars because it is still high in the river, so for now we have to make do with using chemicals to kill off the insects breeding there," said Grazyna Cudak, the gover-

nor's spokeswoman.

But the battle against the river Oder was all but won, she said.

"Because of the systematically falling water level in the Oder and the diminishing flood threat to Slubice, the governor has decided that as of August 8 the evacuation order for citizens is cancelled," Ms. Cudak said.

More than half of the city's 18,000 inhabitants had returned already even though the earlier evacuation order stood until Friday, Ms. Cudak said. The rest of the people would come back Thursday evening or Friday, she added.

"The town will be fully safe when the water falls down to 370 centimetres. It is now (1100 GMT) at 513 cm and falling very nicely by 2-3 centimetres an hour,"

Ms. Cudak said.

The pedestrian border crossing in Slubice, across to Germany's Frankfurt an der Oder, would be opened Monday, but the car crossing would take longer, because Polish and German authorities had to make sure bridges were safe for traffic, she said.

As the threat of flooding diminished the governor called off 200 of the 550 soldiers patrolling the city's sodden dikes, cut down the police force to 170 from 400 people, and reduced border guard and fire brigade staff, she said.

"Our efforts are now focused on patrolling the dikes and reinforcing their base, but the immediate flooding threat is gone," Ms. Cudak said.

Congress attacks government, vows return to power in India

CALCUTTA (AFP) — The Congress (I) Party launched a scathing attack on India's minority government Friday and pledged to return to power.

Congress President Sitaram Kesri, who keeps Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's centre-left government afloat with his parliamentary backing, said: "My message today is to strengthen the Congress organisation and wrest power from the opposition."

To thunderous applause from 4,000 delegates inside a sports stadium complex, Mr. Kesri added: "This is not our government nor are we of the government."

"We are not partners. We are merely helpers. We reserve the right to criticise and control this government. There can be no compromise on that. And I believe strongly that the future belongs to the Congress."

Mr. Kesri, however, added during his 40-minute speech that he had no immediate plan to topple Mr. Gujral's multi-party coalition.

"It is our political responsibility to let the government survive," he said, while stressing only his 112-year-old party could give long-term stability to

the world's largest democracy.

The Congress has been trying to return to power since it was voted out in the 1996 elections. But it is still struggling to retrieve lost support after ruling India for more than four decades.

The three-day session in Calcutta has been called by Congress to review its political and economic strategies.

Another Congress leader, Pranab Mukherjee, declared Mr. Gujral's government should go.

"This meeting will help us to revitalise and rejuvenate the Congress," he told AFP.

"This government has become a platform for histrionics. It is time the Congress should be revitalised and provide India the much-needed stability."

The Congress, routed in last year's elections, helped set up the United Front coalition with its outside support after first voting out a short-lived Hindu nationalist government.

Mr. Kesri, however, ousted the coalition in April, only to fail to draw enough support for his own proposed coalition. He resumed his backing for the United Front after it dumped H.D. Deve Gowda as prime minister and replaced him with the Con-

gress-friendly Mr. Gujral.

The Congress last month pledged to continue backing the Gujral government for at least one year. But most analysts believe Mr. Kesri, who has his own ambitions to become premier, could ditch Mr. Gujral sooner rather than later.

That could lead to fresh parliamentary elections, which are not otherwise due until 2001.

The convention is being boycotted by a fire-brand rebel Congress leader who has threatened to paralyse Calcutta with a mass rally Saturday.

Congress sources said at least 100,000 people could attend the rally by Mamata Banerjee, who feels she is being sidelined by national leaders.

The Congress Party was founded in 1885. It led India to independence and ruled the country uninterrupted until 1977.

Since then it has enjoyed two spells in office, but has seen its share of the national vote steadily decline with the emergence of new regional parties.

Last year, it claimed less than 30 per cent of the vote for the first time, making it the second strongest party in parliament behind the Hindu nationalists.

Foreign experts would be invited to lecture and train Chinese technicians at an international exhibition on military logistics equipment and technology in Beijing in May next year, he said.

Shocked by the display of high-technology warfare put on by Western powers during the 1991 Gulf War, China has been trying to modernise its backward armed forces, much of which still depend on obsolete equipment of Soviet design.

State media reported this week the PLA would gradually adopt a new generation of light armaments already carried by its crack Hong Kong garrison.

Southeast Asia marks ASEAN's 30th anniversary

JAKARTA (R) — The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) broke out the flags of its nine member states at its Jakarta headquarters Friday to mark the official start of its 30th anniversary celebrations.

ASEAN Secretary-General Ajit Singh said in an address at the flag-raising that the organisation had made dramatic strides since its inception in Bangkok in 1967, becoming the world's fourth largest trading bloc.

But he added: "In the days to come, one thing is clear: The challenges before us are immeasurable."

He noted that the vision of ASEAN's founding fathers for a grouping of all 10 Southeast Asian nations was near completion: Burma and Laos last month joined Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, the Philippines, Brunei and Vietnam.

The admission of Cambo-

dia, delayed following a political crisis in the country in early July, was only a matter of time, he added.

Indonesian political analyst Dewi Fortuna Anwar told Reuters that with its past achievements and the challenges ahead, ASEAN "has crossed its rubicon."

It now was a regional entity, although strains remained with different political and social systems in the grouping, ranging from military dictatorship, communism and absolute monarchy to varying degrees of democracy.

Political and diplomatic analysts said the immediate challenges facing ASEAN were its handling of the Cambodia crisis and also the effect of its policy of "constructive engagement" in bringing about political change in Burma.

ASEAN foreign ministers have mandated three of their members, headed by

Indonesia's Ali Alatas and including Prachub Chaiyasarn of Thailand and Domingo Siason of the Philippines, to help mediate an end to the Cambodian crisis.

The ministers are due to meet in Singapore next Monday, but it was not clear what further steps they might make in dealing with Cambodian strongman Hun Sen, who precipitated the crisis by ousting coalition partner and First Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Cambodia's National Assembly voted Wednesday to replace Prince Ranariddh with Foreign Minister Ung Huot, in a move Mr. Alatas said was an internal matter for the country.

Burma's military rulers have been ostracised by Western powers with the United States taking the lead in imposing economic sanctions to force political change.

ASEAN has rejected the headline approach, but has to prove that it can bring about change in Rangoon by bringing Burma into the fold, the analysts said.

Another challenge will be the completion of its vision of developing an ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) by the year 2003, although officials say this is well on track.

Indonesia's President Suharto was presiding over a gala reception Friday evening, and the atmosphere was upbeat.

"The passing of 30 years is generally regarded as the completion of an entire generation. So today, we stand at a crossroads... The passing of the torch from the old guard to the new," Secretary-General Singh said.

Mr. Singh ends his five-year term and hands over at the end of the year to Filipino Foreign Ministry official Rodolfo Severino.

Fighting in Sri Lanka kills 33

COLOMBO (R) — Fierce fighting between government troops and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) rebels killed at least 33 combatants in north and east Sri Lanka, the Defence Ministry said Friday.

The worst battle was at northern Puliyanakulam, where 20 rebels and five soldiers were killed when the guerrillas attacked the troops with mortars Thursday, the ministry said in a statement.

Government troops have been consolidating their

positions south of Puliyanakulam since two divisions, part of an offensive launched in May to open a strategic highway in Sri Lanka's north, linked up Wednesday.

Twenty-eight soldiers were wounded during the confrontation Thursday, the ministry said.

The statement said military intercepts of rebel radio transmissions indicated that five rebels were killed in a clash with troops in north-western Mannar town Wednesday. Two soldiers were

killed in the clash.

In a separate incident Thursday, also in Mannar district, three soldiers were killed by rebels at Serranativu village, the statement added.

The LTTE are fighting a 14-year-old war for a separate homeland for minority Tamils in Sri Lanka's north and east. The government says more than 50,000 people have been killed in the war, but the LTTE put the toll higher.



A cargo plane wreckage on the ground.

Largo plane crash

MIAMI (R) — A cargo plane crashed off at Miami International Airport before the plane crashed (F...)

The plane was carrying... The crash occurred... The cause of the crash is still under investigation.

U.S. shuttle

ANNAPOLIIS, Md. (R) — The shuttle Columbia was launched... The mission is expected to last... The shuttle is carrying... The launch was successful.

U.S. shuttle

ANNAPOLIIS, Md. (R) — The shuttle Columbia was launched... The mission is expected to last... The shuttle is carrying... The launch was successful.



A Metro-Dade firefighter walks past two engines from a Fine Air DC-8 cargo plane which crashed Thursday after taking off at Miami International Airport, authorities said. Witnesses reported that at least one of the engines was on fire before the plane crashed (Reuters photo)

Cargo plane crashes in Miami; at least 3 killed

MIAMI (R) — A Fine Air DC-8 cargo plane crashed seconds after takeoff from Miami International Airport Thursday, scattering flaming wreckage through a busy commercial district and killing at least three people.

Authorities said they did not know whether the three killed were in the aircraft or on the ground. At least two people on the ground were injured.

"All we have are three confirmed casualties... We do not have reason to believe there are more," Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas said at the crash scene.

Fine Air said the plane was believed to be carrying four people — three crew members and a security guard.

Witnesses said one of the plane's engines appeared to catch fire in the air, sending the jet into a nosedive just off the end of one of the airport's runways.

The flaming wreckage crashed and set fire to cars

in the parking lot of a shopping mall, scorched pavement, singed palm trees and knocked down fences.

Fine Air Flight 101, which was carrying 80,000 pounds of textiles, was headed to Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic.

It was the first crash of a jetliner in south Florida since the May 1996 crash of a ValuJet DC-9, which plunged into the Everglades, killing all 110 people on board.

Burning wreckage was scattered across a busy roadway and a parking lot, sending a towering column of thick black smoke into the air that was visible from downtown Miami, more than 10 miles away.

"It dropped like a rock — boom — right out of the sky," witness George Foch said. "It was incredible. It just dropped."

The plane plunged into a busy commercial area of warehouses, offices and shops west of the airport. It narrowly missed some cars

and pedestrians as it skidded across a road, witnesses said.

"I looked to my left and this plane's coming at me," said a witness, adding the jet missed her by about 30 feet.

"I'm still shaking. It happened right in front of me. All I could think of was 'I've got to get out of here.'"

The aircraft took off at 12:34 p.m. and went down moments later in clear weather. Fire crews poured fire retardant chemicals over the wreckage.

Bill Garcia, who was on the picket line at a UPS facility in the area, echoed other witnesses who said one of the plane's engines appeared to have caught fire in the air.

"All of a sudden it veered to the right, then to the left, we could see an engine on fire, then it nosedived," he said. "It looked like a missile."

The National Transportation Safety Board was send-

ing an eight-member team to Miami to investigate the crash, a spokeswoman said. An NTSB official at the scene said the flight data recorder had been recovered.

Two hours after the crash, Miami International Airport was operating at about 50 per cent of normal operations, the FAA said.

Fine Air Services Inc. mainly delivers cargo to Latin America and the Caribbean. Its initial public offering of stock hit the Nasdaq Exchange Wednesday.

The carrier is one of the largest international cargo operators at Miami's airport, a hub for Latin American trade. Cargo represents about 58 per cent of Fine's business. It also does aircraft maintenance.

Nancy Aders, Fine Air vice president of sales, said the crash was the first for the 7-year-old airline. "We just went through an extensive FAA inspection and passed with flying colors three weeks ago," she said.

Guam wreckage yields bodies; report blames pilots

AGANA (R) — U.S. investigators said Friday they had recovered half of the bodies from the Korean Air Lines (KAL) jumbo jet crash in hilly jungles on Guam and a news report said the pilots were to blame for the accident.

"Half of all the passengers and crew have been found and removed," said Matt Furman, an official of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB).

KAL Flight 801 was carrying 254 people from Seoul to Guam. The Boeing 747 ploughed into a hillside five kilometres from Guam's international airport early Wednesday.

Twenty-seven people survived the crash.

The flight recorders recovered from the wreckage were virtually undamaged and could hold clues to the cause of the crash, U.S. officials said.

"Both are in excellent shape, the tapes are in good shape. There is useful data from both the black boxes," Doctor Vernon Ellingstad, director of research and engineering at the NTSB told reporters.

U.S. TV network NBC's

"Nightly News" Thursday quoted unnamed sources as saying initial analysis of the recorders showed the crash was caused by pilot error.

It said the pilots apparently homed in on a radio signal on a hilltop five kilometres from the airport, mistakenly believing they were homed in on the runway.

They then made a straight descent on to the hillside, and lowered the landing gear before they hit, disabling the alarm system that would have warned them of the impending crash, NBC said.

The wreckage, the fuselage broken into four sections, lies below a crest near a guidance beacon and in sight of the runway.

The NTSB office in Washington and investigators in Guam said they had no comment on the report.

Mr. Furman was speaking to about 200 members of mostly South Korean families who had relatives aboard Flight 801.

"There has been a misunderstanding that the removal of your loved ones has stopped and that is not true. We are constantly removing the bodies but I want you to

understand that the work is very hard and dangerous because of the heat and terrain," Mr. Furman said.

Mr. Furman repeated assurances that the bodies were being taken out as quickly as possible. "More than 100 U.S. military personnel are working under dangerous conditions. We have not stopped the process and anything other than this that you may have heard is not true."

Doctor Grady Bray, senior coordinator of the U.S. government's Family Assistance Programme which will conduct the identification process, asked family members to come forward with de-tails of passengers or crew aboard the flight.

"Each family will be asked about the clothes the person was wearing, rings, body markings, dental records and fingerprints."

On Thursday, the senior U.S. military coordinator on the scene, Air Force Colonel Al Riggie, said personnel suspended removing bodies

to await the start of the NTSB investigation.

Many family members of victims then accused the U.S. military of going slow on the recovery process.

Mr. Furman said officials from KAL, Boeing, engine makers Pratt and Whitney, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, the FBI and the NTSB were working together in the investigation.

He repeated NTSB team leader George Black's statement that the investigation would take more than a year.

"Please do not expect us to come up with quick explanations although we will keep you informed on every turn."

A Korean doctor said Friday survivors of the crash have shown great mental strength amid the anguish felt for their dead loved ones.

"All of those we've treated are incredibly strong mentally, especially considering their experience and their loss," said Doctor Moon G. Yoon of Guam Memorial Hospital.

U.S. envoy resolves Bosnian dispute over ambassadors

SARAJEVO (R) — U.S. envoy, Richard Holbrooke, on a whirlwind tour to boost the stalled Bosnia peace process, forged an accord Friday among rival Bosnian leaders over distribution of ambassadorial posts.

The weeks-long dispute had triggered an international freeze on the country's envoys.

Under the deal, the Bosnian envoy to the United Nations would be a Muslim, a Serb would be appointed as ambassador to Washington and a Croat would serve as envoy to Japan. Mr. Holbrooke and other mediators told reporters.

Members of the multi-ethnic collective presidency also agreed on the composition of a joint military commission and on a single area code for the country's telephone network.

"These agreements are full evidence of Western determination to enforce the peace agreement," Mr. Holbrooke told reporters. "These are steps forward and pretty solid ones."

Mr. Holbrooke spent

hours Thursday and early Friday with the leaders of Bosnia's rival factions, pressing for full compliance with the peace treaty he brokered 18 months ago.

The United States and European countries had suspended contacts this week with Bosnian envoys after Muslim, Croat and Serb political leaders failed to agree how to divide diplomatic posts by an Aug. 1 deadline set by major powers.

Bosnian's current ambassadors were appointed by the wartime Muslim-led Bosnian government which fought separatist Serbs and, for 10 months, Croat Forces, their nominal allies.

Serb and Croat leaders had complained that the Muslims, the largest ethnic community, were dominating the diplomatic service. Muslims in turn feared that their rivals would appoint hardliners to the posts, undermining Bosnia's statehood.

German diplomat Gerd Wagner, deputy to the international high representative to Bosnia, said he would

recommend to major powers Friday that they lift the suspension on diplomatic contacts.

Mr. Holbrooke later headed for the northern town of Banja Luka to show support to the moderate Bosnian Serb president in her power struggle with former president and now power broker Radovan Karadzic, an indicted war criminal.

Mr. Holbrooke, architect of the Dayton accords that halted four years of war, returned to the Balkans this week to lean on political leaders in Bosnia, Croatia and Yugoslavia in a bid to speed up the stalled peace process.

It was Mr. Holbrooke's first visit to the region since he negotiated a deal last year that forced Mr. Karadzic to step down as Bosnian Serb president.

Under the agreement which was also signed by his former patron, Serbian leader, Slobodan Milosevic, Mr. Karadzic was supposed to stay out of politics.

One year later, Mr. Karadzic and his allies persist in attempting to circumvent

the Dayton accords which divided Bosnia into autonomous Serb and Muslim-Croat territories ruled by a small central government.

Bosnian Serb President Biljana Plavsic has publicly accused them of plundering the territory through vast smuggling rackets and making the country their personal fiefdom.

They threw her out of the party and threatened to impeach her. The matter is now being discussed in the Serb constitutional court which is to decide whether Ms. Plavsic stays or goes.

After meeting Ms. Plavsic, Mr. Holbrooke heads to Belgrade for talks with his old diplomatic adversary Mr. Milosevic, now president of Yugoslavia, comprising Serbia and Montenegro.

Diplomats said Mr. Holbrooke would threaten Mr. Milosevic with economic sanctions unless he abides by his Dayton commitments, which include handing over indicted war criminals such as Mr. Karadzic.

Bonn talks on global warming make little headway

BONN (R) — Progress is slow on a global pact to reduce greenhouse gas emissions next century because the United States and Japan have failed to make concrete proposals, delegates at a United Nations-sponsored conference said Thursday.

Industrialised nations generally agree on the need for specific targets beyond the year 2000 to cut output of the gases seen as responsible for global warming. However only the 15-nation European Union has so far come up with one.

The U.S. and Japan are openly critical of the EU plan, but have not yet put forward their own proposals. Time is running short before a December conference in Kyoto, Japan, is supposed to make a final decision, delegates said.

"There are two main proposals we are waiting for: One is from Japan and the other is from the U.S.," said Raul Estrada-Oyuela of Argentina, chairman of the ad hoc group on the Berlin mandate, which is responsible for devising the U.N. plan for cutting greenhouse gases beyond the year 2000.

Michael Zammit Cutajar, executive secretary of the U.N. framework Convention on Climate Change, told the same news conference: "I am concerned about the lack of progress. Time is shrinking as we approach Kyoto."

But Mr. Cutajar said he remained hopeful that a White House conference scheduled for early October would clarify the U.S. position and give fresh impetus to the global talks.

"These negotiations are driven by deadlines," he said.

Referring to the round of talks that started here last week with over 150 countries taking part, German Environment Minister Angela Merkel said in a statement: "In the essential points we have not come one step forward."

At the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio De Janeiro, developed nations, which account for the lion's share of greenhouse gas emissions, pledged to cut such emissions to 1990 levels by the year 2000.

Poorer nations did not pledge cuts, which they said could hinder their development.

In Berlin in 1995, developed countries only said they would make commitments beyond 2000.

Amnesty says massacres in Rwanda escalating

NAIROBI (AFP) — Random massacres of unarmed civilians are being regularly carried out in Rwanda, and have left several thousand dead in the past three months, Amnesty International said Thursday.

"Thousands of unarmed civilians are being deliberately and arbitrarily killed in Rwanda," a statement from the human rights organisation said.

"Massacres have intensified since May 1997, while the international community looks the other way."

Amnesty said that during May, June and July, more than 2,300 unarmed civilians are estimated to have been killed. "These are just the specific cases which have been reported to us — the real number is probably

much higher," the statement said.

"The organisation is receiving daily reports of killings of men, women and young children by soldiers of the Rwandese Patriotic Army (RPA), especially in the northwestern regions of Ruhengeri and Gisenyi, which have become virtual no-go areas."

The population in these regions are reported to be "living in terror."

Armed opposition groups believed to be composed of soldiers of the former Rwandan army and militia responsible for the genocide of 1994 are also reported to be carrying out attacks on civilians as well as on RPA personnel.

Whole families, including many children, have been

hunted down in their homes.

"The organisation urges the Rwandan authorities to take immediate measures to prevent further loss of civilian life by prohibiting unlawful killings by its armed forces," the statement said.

"Given the persistent and grave human rights violations taking place in Rwanda, it cannot be considered safe for refugees to return," Amnesty said.

Hundreds of thousands of Rwandans, mostly Hutus, fled the country fearing reprisals for the systematic massacre of at least 500,000 Tutsis in the 1994 genocide. Most have since returned, but some are still in neighbouring countries.

Inkatha withdraws from Kwazulu-Natal peace talks

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — South Africa's Zulu Nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) is pulling out of peace negotiations in the troubled Kwazulu-Natal province, the Business Day newspaper reported Friday.

The IFP leadership decided to withdraw the mandate of its negotiators, claiming that South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) which is probing apartheid-era crimes has targeted their chief, Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

For the past year, IFP and African National Congress (ANC) representatives have been negotiating a definitive peace in the eastern province which was torn by 11 years of civil war between the two parties. A tentative truce was signed by local leaders in May last year.

More than 20,000 people were killed between 1985 and 1996 in an undeclared civil war between the ANC and the IFP. It is difficult to hold peace talks while "hostile activity" is in progress, IFP Chairman Ben Ngubane said, quoted by Business Day.

Mr. Ngubane slammed the TRC court sessions held since Monday in Durban

during which Mr. Buthelezi's involvement in apartheid-era crimes are being examined.

On Wednesday, a political commissioner and IFP fighter, Daluxolo Luthuli, told the court that Mr. Buthelezi was fully aware of the activities of the death squads who spread terror throughout the Inkatha stronghold of Kwazulu-Natal during the 1980s.

Denying the accusations, the IFP leadership called on President Nelson Mandela to "fundamentally re-examine" the damage caused by the commission.

"The TRC process, flawed in every facet since its inception, merely creates an arena for biased propaganda and clichés of political correctness which end up echoing what the witnesses think the inquisitors want to hear," the party said in a statement released to the Sapa news agency.

The truth body, headed by Nobel Peace Laureate Archbishop Desmond Tutu, is tasked with exposing abuses committed between 1960 and 1993 under the apartheid system.

In a separate development, South African Police Minister Sydney Mufamadi said Thursday investigators

had found that large numbers of security branch files were destroyed before the African National Congress (ANC) took power in 1994.

But investigators did uncover a small number of apartheid security police files which were not shredded, as well as some documents indicating which files had been destroyed, the minister said. The files covered the period 1960 to 1994.

Mr. Mufamadi said he had met the investigators Thursday and after consultation had decided not to reveal the contents of the documents which had been unearthed in order not to prejudice further investigations. He gave no further details.

The investigators were overseen by the Police Ministry, the statutory Truth and Reconciliation Commission probing human rights abuses committed under apartheid, Human Rights Commission and the National Archives.

A junior policeman told the truth probe in October last year that police in one small town had shredded a pile of files "as big as a table."

Widespread rumours have abounded that policemen across the country did the same to cover up their actions.

U.S. attorney apologises to Pakistan

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — U.S. county prosecutor, Robert Horan, has apologised to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif for his remarks which, interpreted as slur upon the Pakistani nation, had triggered countrywide outrage, an official spokesman here said Friday.

The spokesman said the

Foreign Office, which has been demanding the lawyer retract his statement, was satisfied with the "expression of regret and apology" by Mr. Horan in his letter addressed to Mr. Sharif on Aug. 6.

The text of the letter was not released.

Local newspapers said Mr. Horan, stressing the press

misquoted his June 23 television interview, said "I sincerely regret that anything I have said has been interpreted as a slur upon the Pakistani nation or upon your government."

He has also apologised to the people of Pakistan for unhappiness caused by his reported remarks.

Albright: With our help, Israelis and Palestinians can move steadily towards a better future or they can remain bogged down in mutual suspicion and recriminations

WASHINGTON — In a major foreign policy address on the Middle East, U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright told the National Press Club on August 6 that there is no place in the stalled Middle East peace process for violence and terror and "there is no room for using security cooperation in a negotiation." At the same time she emphasized that "the principle of refraining from unilateral acts is central to maintaining mutual confidence."

Provided "there is some progress on security issues," Ms. Albright announced that she would be willing to go to the Middle East "at the end of this month" to consult with the leaders of the region, including Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

She confirmed that the Middle East special coordinator Dennis Ross will be in the region at the end of this week. "The primary purpose of Ambassador Ross's visit will be to deal with the security dimension of the current crisis," she said.

The secretary also called for Israelis and Palestinians to return to several basic principles which included "a mutual commitment to security and against violence," an agreement "to settle their differences over the subjects of negotiation at the bargaining table, and not somewhere else," and a demonstration by both parties "in word and deed, (of) their understanding of peace not as one option among many, but as the only option that will provide for the security and well-being of their people."

Reiterating U.S. concern about the Middle East, she declared: "Let there be no doubt, the United States will continue to do all it can to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians and throughout the Middle East. We will do so because progress towards peace serves our vital interests, helps protect our friends, reflects our values and because it is right."

Following the speech, the secretary took several questions from the National Press Club audience. Among other points, she reported that the United States is "very interested" in making progress on the Israeli-Syrian track and "prepared to assist" in getting it back in motion.

Following is the State Department text of Ms. Albright's remarks followed by questions and answers:

The Israel-Palestinian peace process

It is gratifying that, with President Clinton's leadership, we have made progress during the six months I have served as Secretary of State in a number of areas of importance to the security, prosperity and values of the American people.

The United States has become party to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

NATO has invited three of Central Europe's new democracies to join and has forged historic partnership with Russia and Ukraine. Congress has approved an increase in funding for international affairs, and devised a plan to spur United Nations reform while paying back arrears.

We are moving ahead on implementing Dayton and backing the war crimes tribunal.

We have renewed normal trade relations with China while being forthright about our concerns on proliferation and our support for human rights.

We have forged new guidelines for our security cooperation with Japan, made progress towards Four Party Talks on Korea, strengthened our working relationships with Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean and unveiled a plan to increase trade and investment in Africa. Overall, this has been a remarkable period. Unfortunately, progress achieved between Israelis and Palestinians in the Middle East, an area vital to our interests, is now threatened.

Today, I would like to discuss the reasons why progress towards peace in this region has stalled and offer some suggestions for restoring positive momentum. The urgency of that goal was underlined one week ago, when bombs exploded in the Mahane Yehuda market in Jerusalem, killing 13 Israelis — one of whom was also an American citizen — and wounding 168. Behind those numbers are the faces of mothers,

fathers, grandparents and children killed not for anything they had done, but simply for who and where they were. Sadly and tragically, the Israeli people — almost fifty years into the history of their state — is still the target of a murderous campaign of terror.

No people should have to live this way.

At the same time, it says something very good and very right about the Israeli people that they will never grow used to such events; they will never fail to respond with outrage and grief, never fail to mourn the individual lives that have been cut short, never cease to demand an end to terrorist attacks — and never give in to them.

It also says something hopeful about the future of the Middle East that, as we speak, 162 Arab, Israeli and Palestinian teenagers are in a summer camp in the woods of Maine, a camp sponsored by the Seeds of Peace programme, and that this tragic bombing has brought those young people closer together in shock, sorrow and determination to end the cycle of violence in their region.

Americans share each of these feelings and reactions. Our thoughts are with those who know and loved the persons killed or injured last week. We stand by Israel in its fight against terror. We maintain our unshakable commitment to Israel's security. And we join governments and peoples from every part of the globe who have condemned last week's savage attack.

Our convictions are clear: Terrorism is evil. It can never be justified. It is the instrument of cowards. It kills the innocent not by accident, but by design. And its design in the Middle East is to murder the peace process by shredding security and destroying the hope for peace.

We do not yet know the identity of the bombers at Mahane Yehuda.

But we can be sure this crime was not a random event. Terrorists often strike when they believe the parties are poised to make progress. It may be more than coincidence that this latest attack occurred shortly after the announcement that negotiations of the interim committees set up by the agreement would resume, and on the eve of an American effort to share ideas on how to break the current impasse.

We have come too far in the process of Arab-Israeli peacemaking to allow the vultures of violence to shape the region's future.

The stakes are too high. Past sacrifices have been too great. And the peoples of the region have been burdened for too long by bloodshed and strife.

We must respond to those who have declared war on peace by waging war on terror, understanding that forging peace and fighting terrorism are not separate struggles, but rather two halves of the same struggle. We cannot succeed in one if we do not prevail in both. The path ahead is difficult, but so was the journey already made.

Over the years, the quest for peace in the Middle East has suffered multiple shocks, setbacks and traumas. We have watched in horror as buses and markets have been bombed, schoolchildren attacked, great leaders such as President Sadat and Prime Minister Rabin assassinated and innocent people gunned down even while in a house of worship.

Nevertheless, in Madrid, Oslo, Washington, Cairo and in Arava, we have seen historic enemies come together, speaking the language of peace. We have seen ties between Arabs and Israelis expand and a process of regional cooperation begin to tackle tough issues such as water, the environment and refugees.

We have seen a series of economic summits bring Arab and Israeli business people together to lay the groundwork for increased trade, investment and prosperity.

We have seen extensive progress towards ending the secondary and tertiary boycotts of Israel, thereby opening Israel's products to the world and the world's products to Israel. We have seen substantive negotiations aimed at a comprehensive settlement between Israel and all its Arab neighbours.

And we have seen many nations that are outside the region but affected by it — nations such as

Russia, Norway, Japan and members of the EU — lend their diplomatic, political and financial support to peace. We must ask ourselves why this process has survived all the traumas and how it has endured despite bitterness, sorrow, suffering and anger.

The answer is that the vast majority of the people of the region, Israelis, Arabs and Palestinians, have come to believe that the status quo is unacceptable, that the costs of conflict are too high, and that the effort to achieve peace holds at least the promise of a better future.

They understand that, without peace, their societies will remain shackled by the preoccupation of the past: their region will fall further behind in the global marketplace; and their children will grow up in an environment of uncertainty, danger and fear.

The popular desire for peace is durable, resilient and strong.

This is what extremists and terrorists fear most. And this is why, despite the bombing this past week, and despite threats of further violence, the process of peacemaking has survived and will continue to survive.

When the Israelis and Palestinians came together in Oslo in 1993, the effort to achieve peace entered a new phase. The parties agreed for the first time on mutual recognition. And they agreed on a road map for transforming what had been an irresolvable confrontation based on clashing ideologies and violence into a solvable political negotiation based on shared interests. The leaders were able to agree to this because the Israeli and Palestinian people understood the need to recognise and deal with one another directly and to accept each other's political identity.

Now that the threshold of mutual recognition has been crossed, here can be no going back to mutual rejection, or going back to mutual denial. Neither party can return to an earlier time.

By agreeing to accept one another as partners, the Israelis and Palestinians took an irreversible step towards ending their conflict.

The question today is not whether the Israelis and Palestinians will reach a mutually acceptable agreement, but when. This question of time is an important one. With our help, Israelis and Palestinians can move steadily towards a better future or they can remain bogged down in mutual suspicion and recriminations.

The longer decisions are postponed, the more conflict and suffering will ensue. Prime Minister Netanyahu said recently that leading Israel was like a "bed of roses," but with "a lot of thorns."

I suspect that Chairman Arafat might describe his job in a similar way. One cannot talk fairly about the Middle East without recognising the difficulty of the challenges the leaders face. But one cannot talk accurately about the region without recognising how important peace is to both the Israeli and Palestinian people and without acknowledging that they have made the choice for peace.

It is important in each society that the centre work hard to make its influence felt over that of the extremes. And it is vital that the message be conveyed that it is no longer acceptable to avoid the tough choices required to move forward the quest of peace. Unfortunately, in recent months, since the promising agreement over Hebron, progress has stalled. We now face a crisis of confidence that has put at risk past gains, rekindled old animosities, and left Israelis and Palestinians alike fearful about what the future may bring.

In order to break the current deadlock, Israelis and Palestinians must return to basic principles. These principles do not focus on the substance of negotiations, which the parties must resolve between themselves at the bargaining table, but rather on the even more fundamental question of how the parties should approach negotiations in order to create the best possible environment for success.

What are these principles? First, the sine qua non for progress is a mutual commitment to security and against violence. This is basic. This is common sense. There is no place in the peace process for violence or terror and there is no room for using security cooperation as leverage in a negotiation.

That approach destroys confidence, fuels extremism and undermines prospects for peace.

In recent months, many Israelis have come to believe that the Palestinian Authority is not taking serious steps to combat terror; that Palestinian words are not followed by action; and that the words, themselves, are not consistent or clear. They are concerned that violence in the streets may be orchestrated. And they wonder whether the Palestinian Authority is doing all it can to prevent incitement to violence and terrorist attacks.

They fear that violence is being given a green light, or a yellow light, or a blinking light — when what is called for in Oslo and what is essential for peace is an unrelenting red. We do not ask the impossible. With suicide terrorists, there can be no perfect system for guaranteeing security. We cannot expect 100 per cent success. But there must be 100 per cent effort both with regard to unilateral Palestinian Authority measures against terror and in Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation.

What does this mean specifically? It means sharing information and coordinating law-enforcement actions. It means an unrelenting effort to detect and deter potential terrorist acts. It means identifying and seizing arms caches such as the one raided successfully by Palestinian police in Beit Sahour two weeks ago.

It means arresting and prosecuting those involved in planning, financing, supplying or abetting terrorism. And it means doing everything possible to create a moral atmosphere in which advocacy of violence and terror withers away. The terrorists are unrelenting, and so must we be unrelenting in our struggle against them. On this issue, there can be no winks, no double meanings, no double standards and, with respect to the imprisonment of terrorists, no revolving doors.

Nor can the level of security cooperation ebb and flow with the ups and downs of negotiation. The Palestinian commitment to fight terror must be constant and absolute. This is essential to move the peace process forward. It is necessary, obviously, to create a climate of greater security and confidence within Israel. But it is also essential to Palestinians. Extremist violence is a grave threat to Palestinian society. Palestinians are sometimes the direct targets of this violence. And they are the ones who suffer economic and humanitarian hardships when Israel clamps down on access.

While Israelis have too often been the victims of terror, it is fair to say that attacks by Islamic Jihad and Hamas have made ordinary Palestinians pay a terrible price not only in their day-to-day well-being, but also in their long-range hopes and possibilities. Israelis and Palestinians must unite to defeat terrorism, which is their common enemy. They must unite to end violence, apprehend perpetrators and create an environment in which it is possible for all not simply to survive, but to thrive — to go about the business of building secure and productive lives. This is the first principle of Oslo and it is the cornerstone of an enduring peace.

The second principle is that both sides agreed to settle their differences over the subjects of negotiations at the bargaining table, and not somewhere else. It is in the interests of each party to avoid steps that undermine the other's confidence and trust in the process. In practice, this means foregoing unilateral acts which prejudice or pre-determine issues reserved for permanent status negotiations.

Let me be clear. There is no moral equivalency between suicide bombers and bulldozers, between killing innocent people and building houses. It is simply not possible to address political issues seriously in a climate of intimidation and terror.

But the principle of refraining from unilateral acts is central to maintaining mutual confidence. Especially as we look ahead to permanent status negotiations, it is essential that the parties think through how their actions will affect the environment for those negotiations.

Palestinians argue that Israel has taken some actions in recent months that pre-judge issues reserved for permanent status negotiations. These include settle-

ment activity, construction at Har Homa and the confiscation of land. These actions have generated uncertainty among many Palestinians about Israeli intentions, undermined for them the very logic of negotiations and caused a crisis of confidence in their Israeli partner. It is fair to ask: How can you create a credible environment for negotiation when actions are being taken that seem to predetermine the outcome?

To restore confidence, both sides must think seriously and in advance about the potential impact of what they do and say. They must do more than ask whether an action is technically legal; they must ask whether it is wise, whether it is consistent with the spirit of their partnership, and whether it brings them closer to the goals of their agreements.

The third rule of the road for the negotiating process is that both parties must demonstrate, in word and deed, their understanding of peace not as one option among many, but as the only option that will provide for the security and well-being of their people. It was this mutual recognition that made Israel and Palestinian partners in pursuing peace. And it is the logic of this partnership that has made it possible to overcome past obstacles and setbacks, as demonstrated by the Hebron agreement earlier this year.

Both Israeli and Palestinian leaders have been consistent in stating their commitment to peace. But the success of the negotiating process requires more. They must reaffirm their commitment to partnership and to working together to solve problems.

They must reiterate their understanding that the future of their two peoples is not a zero-sum game in which one party will win and the other will lose; or in which one will get up from the bargaining table with an advantage over the other. If two people are in a boat heading for the rapids, they should not be arguing about how they got there; they should be rowing together in the direction of security and shore.

Israelis and Palestinians will continue to have substantive differences in their negotiations, especially given the issues of permanent status that are yet to be addressed. The depth of these differences makes it all the more vital that the parties search for ways to rebuild mutual confidence and restore the momentum towards peace.

A spirit of partnership must motivate each side. And a recognition of their partner's legitimate needs must influence behaviour. Indeed, the new mindset must be that "there is no problem too big that we cannot resolve together."

As Israelis and Palestinians move to reenergise their negotiations, it is imperative that the international community do its share to support this effort and to recognise that prosperity is a parent to peace. Every nation with an interest in the region — especially Israel — has a stake in the social and economic progress of the Palestinian Authority and should contribute appropriately to it.

And Arab states have a responsibility to build peace through a normalisation of relations throughout their region. Dialogue, business contracts and personal contacts should take the place of boycotts and hostility. This is the logic of the Middle East economic summit planned for Doha this November. Countries in the region will only hurt the peace process and their own economic future if they fail to attend that summit.

In this regard, I salute King Hussein both for his direct contributions to the peace process and for the effort he has made to persuade Arabs and Israelis alike of the economic and political benefits of peace.

For decades, the United States has been deeply engaged in the pursuit of a comprehensive Middle East peace. President Clinton — like his predecessors — has considered this to be a top priority and has worked hard to support the efforts of the parties to reach that goal.

Over the years, U.S. policy towards the Arab-Israeli peace process has been based on key elements which have underpinned our approach.

These core elements remain valid today. Let me reaffirm them: We seek a just and lasting peace achieved through direct negotiations based on U.N. Security

Council resolutions 242 and 338, including the principle upon which every Arab-Israeli agreement has been built — land for peace. We believe that peace must be accompanied by real security for Israel and its Arab neighbours both from external threats and from terror.

We believe peace must be just, lasting and comprehensive, leading to treaties based on normal relations and genuine peace between peoples, including between Israel and Syria and Israel and Lebanon, and we believe that peace must address the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people. Principles, however, cannot produce agreements, the hard work of negotiation does. And the United States has tried through a variety of ways to promote that process.

We have worked at times to insulate and protect negotiations; we have moved to defuse crises both on the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Lebanon fronts; we have marshalled economic and political support; and, as was the case during the Israeli-Syrian talks at the Wye Plantation and during the Hebron negotiations, we have at times even gone beyond the traditional role of facilitator and played the role of mediator.

At the same time, the United States is a party to the Arab-Israeli conflict. We do not assume the same risks and responsibilities as parties struggling with the issues of political identity and physical survival. As a consequence, we cannot, should not, and will not impose solutions.

Nor can we create the political will required for Arabs and Israelis to make the tough decisions for peace. These are their decisions — not ours. But given our indispensable role and the trust and confidence we have gained, we do have a responsibility during good times and bad to work with them in the pursuit of peace. Indeed, they want us to play this role. And we will continue to do so.

In the past several months, as the negotiations foundered and Israeli-Palestinian recriminations intensified, we sought, in several ways, to put the process back on track working closely with President Mubarak of Egypt, our strategic partner in peace, we tried to define a basis on which the parties could reengage. We promoted direct contacts to restore a practical working relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

We focused on parallel steps each side could take to address the concerns of the other. We built on these contacts to renew discussions on the interim agreement issues and were developing ideas

to overcome the differences that had prevented the permanent status talks from convening.

Indeed, on the eve of the July 30 attack in Jerusalem, the President and I felt it was time to send Dennis Ross to the region to convey U.S. ideas. That trip will now go forward at the end of this week.

The primary focus of Ambassador Ross' visit will be to deal with the security dimension of the current crisis. If the right kind of steps are being taken to improve the security environment, we will have a basis for going forward — as we must — with consideration of political issues, beginning with the need to restore trust and make progress towards fulfilling the terms of the interim agreement.

We must also, however, prepare to do more. The Israeli-Palestinian crisis of confidence has cost the peace process six months. Suspicions and mistrust are running high. The logic of Oslo, based on mutual recognition, is sound, but the incremental approach of the interim agreement needs to be married to an accelerated approach to permanent status.

To restore momentum, we have to increase confidence on both sides about where the negotiating process is leading and what the outcome of permanent status talks might be. If the parties have a clear, mutual and favourable sense of the ultimate direction of negotiation, it will be easier for them to overcome setbacks and avoid distractions along the way. This will require accelerating permanent status negotiations.

Today, this step is urgent and important. Accordingly, provided there is some progress on security issues, I am prepared to travel to the Middle East at the end of this month. I will consult closely with the leaders of the region and especially with Israeli and Palestinian leaders, to improve the climate for negotiations, and to discuss the procedural and substantive aspects of the permanent status issues.

Reenergising the Israeli-Palestinian peace process will not happen overnight. It will take time. But President Clinton and I remain committed to doing everything possible to help the parties succeed.

We will continue to play our role as a full partner. In this partnership, only the parties must take the decisions, but we can support them. In this partnership, only the parties must conduct the negotiations, but we can be with them at the table. In this partnership, only the parties must determine the shape of peace, but we can work with them to facilitate, protect and broaden that peace.

Let there be no doubt, the Uni-

ted States will continue to do all it can to promote peace between Israelis and Palestinians and throughout the Middle East. We will do so because progress towards peace serves our vital interests, helps protect our friends, reflects our values and because it is right.

No region of the world has seen greater suffering or more persistent conflict than the Middle East. No generation has a better chance than the current one to replace the downwards cycle of conflict with an upwards ladder of opportunity.

As we approach the new century, there are no cold war divisions fuelling a regional rivalry. And the way to peace — once obscure — has been laid out first at Madrid, then more clearly at Oslo and in the agreements since.

So now the choice for Israelis and Palestinians alike is between two futures. They can shy from the risks of peace and ensure a future of more uncertainty, hardship and fighting or they can come together to renew their partnership and fulfil the promise of peace.

For Israelis, that is the promise of a bustling economy with Pacific Rim potential. It is assurances of a common front in the fight against terror, a steady growth in regional cooperation and the ability to raise children in security and peace. For Palestinians, it is the promise of an end to decades of strife.

It is the chance, as full participants in a growing regional economy, to use their energy and skills to create a future for themselves of steadily increasing prosperity, dignity and hope.

And for all the people of the region, it is the promise, as President Clinton has said, of "building a land that is as bountiful and peaceful as it is holy," and of offering to Israelis and Palestinians alike the "miracle of a normal life."

The United States cannot choose this future for Israel or for the Palestinians. That is their choice and their challenge. We do not underestimate the difficulties. We are cognisant of the dangers. But America was built on optimism and on the faith that the future can be made better than the past, not only within our own borders but within all the borders of the earth.

It is in that spirit, and with that faith, that we ask of ourselves and of our partners a renewed and determined effort to transform from hope to reality the elusive dream of a Middle East peace.

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Emirates

THE FINEST IN THE SKY

World Athletics Championships

Boldon finally strikes gold

Kipketer wins men's 800m gold medal

ATHENS (AFP) — Ato Boldon finally struck gold when he won the 200m World Championship title here on Friday night.

The 25-year-old, who risked becoming the youngest 'never has been' after his crushing defeat in the 100m final, never looked like being beaten as he powered home ahead of Frank Fredericks and Brazil's Claudinei Da Silva.

Boldon, double bronze medalist at the Atlanta Olympics, timed 20.04, Fredericks, winner in 1995, clocked 20.23 and Da Silva 20.26.

Wilson Kipketer of Denmark won the men's 800 metres gold medal clocking a time of 1min 43.38sec. Norberto Pellez of Cuba finished second in 1:44.00 and Rich Kenah of the United States was third in 1:44.25.

Boldon was hugged by training partner Maurice Greene, winner of the 100m gold, before he went on his first ever world champion victory lap.

Before the race the Trinidadian had admitted that the pressure was on him to stop talking a good race, and instead win one.

"Now is the time to show I can do it," he admitted. Boldon's victory was confirmation of the changing of the guard in world sprinting.

At only 23, and with Greene at 24, both men threaten to dominate the sport for the foreseeable future.

Fredericks is 29 and nearing the end of his career while both Carl Lewis and Linford Christie announced their retirement this season, confirming now was the time for the young pretenders.

Fredericks, who has been suffering from a knee problem all season, never looked like challenging Boldon and in the end did well to fend off Da Silva, who finished fifth in the 1995 World Championships.

Fiz plays Cinderella in repeat gold bid

ATHENS (AFP) —

Spanish marathon hope Martin Fiz will wear the shoes on Sunday that he wore when he won the world marathon title in Gothenburg two years ago instead of the pair he wore at Atlanta last year.

The 34-year-old Fiz, who won the 1993 Helsinki marathon on his debut, said on Friday that he was superstitious and preferred to wear shoes that had brought him golden glory in Gothenburg rather than the agony of finishing fourth in Atlanta last year.

"I am going to wear these shoes as I am a little superstitious and I hope that they will bring a repeat of the Spanish one-two-three from the European Championships in Helsinki in 1994," he said.

Fiz, who in a theatrical gesture plucked the 'good' pair of shoes from a glass case and disposed of the Olympic ones, said that he feared the Africans and a couple of other runners.

"The Africans can adapt to the immense heat very well while I also think that the Mexicans and Portuguese runner Antonio Pinto will be up there challenging," Fiz said.

Sweet revenge for Pintushevich in 200m as Sri Lanka takes 1st ever track medal

ATHENS (AFP) — Zhanna Pintushevich wiped away the heartache of her 100 metres defeat by winning the 200m title at the World Championships here on Friday.

The 25-year-old Ukrainian came through in the final metres to pass pre-race favourite Merlene Ottey, who was also overtaken by Susanthika Jayasinghe of Sri Lanka.

Pintushevich clocked 22.32, Jayasinghe 22.39 and Ottey 22.40.

For Pintushevich, her victory run had special meaning after the 100m final.

On Sunday Pintushevich thought she had pipped American Marion Jones for the 100m crown and went on a victory lap, surrounded by photographers.

But seconds later it was announced Jones had won and Pintushevich's tears of joy turned to tears of heartbreak.

Tonight her win was never in doubt. For Jayasinghe it was the greatest performance of her life and the first ever track medal for Sri Lanka at the World Championships.

For Merlene Ottey, attempting to

take her third successive 200m title, it was a stunning upset.

The 37-year-old, coached now by former Olympic gold medalist Linford Christie, will now almost certainly retire from major championships.

Before the race she said it was a miracle she could still compete at this level aged 37 and would continue as long as the miracle continued.

Third place here proved that age had finally caught up with Ottey.



Merlene Ottey of Jamaica goes out of the blocks to start in her semi-finals heat of the women's 200 metres event at the World Athletics Championships. Ottey won the race in 22.26 seconds (Reuters photo)



Australia's Melinda Gainsford-Taylor runs in her semi-final heat of the women's 200 metres event at the World Championships. Gainsford-Taylor clocked a time of 22.70 seconds and qualified for the final. Inger Miller of the United States (R) won the race in 22.59 seconds (Reuters photo)



Allen Johnson of the United States (R) wins the final of the 110 metres hurdles event at the World Championships. Johnson won the gold medal in 12.93 seconds ahead of Colin Jackson of Great Britain (L) and Igor Kovac (C) of Slovakia (Reuters photo)

World Championships turn into the 'Johnson Games'

ATHENS (AFP) — The sixth World Championships turned into the "Johnson Games" after a sizzling 110m hurdle victory by defending champion Allen Johnson here on Thursday evening.

Only 48-hours after 400m champion Michael Johnson defended his title in convincing style, 26-year-old Allen Johnson ran the second fastest time of his life to take the gold.

Quizzed about the sudden dominance of the name Johnson he said: "There seems to be a lot of Johnsons about but for me I simply want to be the number one Allen Johnson."

It was a stunning showing by the hurdler in one of track's most difficult disciplines.

He exploded at the gun and was never headed as he crossed the line in 12.93secs to beat world record holder Colin Jackson of Britain and Igor Kovac of Slovakia.

His winning time was only one hundredth of a second behind the 12.92 he ran to win the gold in Atlanta and only two hundredths of a second outside Jackson's world record.

"I was nervous but I was pumped up. I wanted to get away fast and I did," said Johnson.

"I was not trying to break the world record. I just wanted to win," he added.

Ato Boldon served notice on Frank Fredericks that the 200 metres world title is his for the taking during their semi-final confrontation.

Boldon, still smarting from his 100m humiliation when he could only manage fifth, headed Fredericks with a 20.09 in the fastest semi-final of the hot steamy evening in the Olympic stadium.

It was the perfect lift for Boldon going into Friday's final.

"Tomorrow I will let it all hang out and put on a show," promised the 23-year-old from Trinidad and Tobago who is still looking for his first major title.

Defending champion Michael Johnson had opted to compete in only the 400m, leaving the door wide open for the two favourites.

In the women's 200m, Merlene Ottey, attempting to win her third successive gold, was boosted when her arch rival Marie Jose Percec of France pulled out of the semi-finals.

As the 37-year-old Ottey was cruising into the final with a winning time of 22.26sec in her semi-final heat — her fastest run of the season — the French double Olympic champion was undergoing treatment for a hamstring injury.

Although Percec had had a miserable season and did not want to come to the championships she had looked extremely strong in the earlier qualifying rounds.

But despite the pressure on her to win, Ottey was determined to play it down.

"It's not do or die," she said. "It is do or don't. I'm just delighted to have done my best time of the season."

Now Ottey's biggest danger is

Zhanna Pintushevich of the Ukraine who won the silver in the 100m final earlier in the week.

Pintushevich has run the second fastest 200m this season, a 22.17, last month.

"Also threatening the seemingly-ageless Ottey, who admits it is a miracle she can still compete for the gold, is Australia's Melinda Taylor-Gainsford who finished fourth in her heat to squeeze into the final.

"I'm just delighted to be in the final. I will think about tomorrow's final tomorrow," said the Australian, who is third fastest this season after clocking 22.23 in Stuttgart in July.

New Zealand's Beatrice Faumuina won the women's discus gold medal to give her mother the greatest thrill of her life as she watched in the stands.

The 22-year-old Faumuina, unbeaten this season, won with 66.82 metres in her third throw of the competition to give New Zealand their first gold since the World Championships started in 1983.

Faumuina, an only child and whose family comes from Samoa, had not even managed to qualify for either the last world final or last year's Olympic final.

"I always thought I had the talent to make it big but having failed to make two big finals there was a certain amount of doubt in my mind as to how I would do. I think making the final made a heck of a difference to my confidence," she said.

"However, I let my enthusiasm get the better of me and after the second and third throws I didn't make another legal one so I was really nervous right up to the end. It was a wonderful feeling as I stepped up to take the last throw as I knew I had won," she added.

"It's a really wonderful feeling and it's wonderful for New Zealand. Rugby dominates but this should make some headlines!" the former netballer commented.

The one-time economics student, who works for a New Zealand newspaper on advertising sales, said she had had enough of Europe and would be going home.

"I imagine I will get a warm reception!" she said.

Astrid Kumbernuss of Germany retained her women's shot put title by five centimetres.

Kumbernuss was victorious with 20.71m. Vita Pavlych of Ukraine took the silver medal with 20.66m with another German, Stephanie Storp, third with 19.22m.

"I wanted to show who was boss in the ring," said Kumbernuss. "I knew it would be difficult."

For Pavlych, it was another bitter blow.

"The difference between Kumbernuss and myself was just five centimetres. I lost out on a medal in Atlanta by 10 centimetres. I am sure that one day I will get these bloody centimetres in my favour," said Pavlych.

Former Olympic champion Gunnell announces retirement

ATHENS (R) — Former Olympic 400 metres hurdles champion Sally Gunnell announced her retirement from athletics on Thursday after a torn calf muscle injury forced her out of the World Championships.

"This is it," said Gunnell, who turned 31 last week. "Basically the luck's run out, if I'm fit my last major race will be at Gateshead

next month. "I've had some brilliant years, even the last couple of years when I've been injured and haven't won any medals have been good, but the time has come to call it a day."

"I always hoped I'd know when the time was right and now I know it is."

Gunnell's announcement came as no real surprise as she almost quit six weeks

ago after losing her form. She also spoke then about having a baby, and repeated that on Thursday.

"It's time to think about starting a family, go away and eat some chips and put on a couple of stone," she joked.

Gunnell enjoyed tremendous success after switching from racing the 100 hurdles and flat 400s six years ago.

After finishing fifth in the 1988 Olympics in Seoul she won the Olympic title in Barcelona in 1992 and the following year collected the world title in Stuttgart, setting a world record time of 52.74 seconds.

That time has been bettered only twice — by Americans Kim Batten (52.61) and Tonja Buford-Bailey (52.62) — in the

1995 World Championship final in Gothenburg.

Gunnell was unable to defend her title there because of a foot injury, and with continuing injuries, has never really regained her dominance in the event.

Injury also forced her out of the Olympic semifinal last year after which her retirement was inevitable sooner rather than later.

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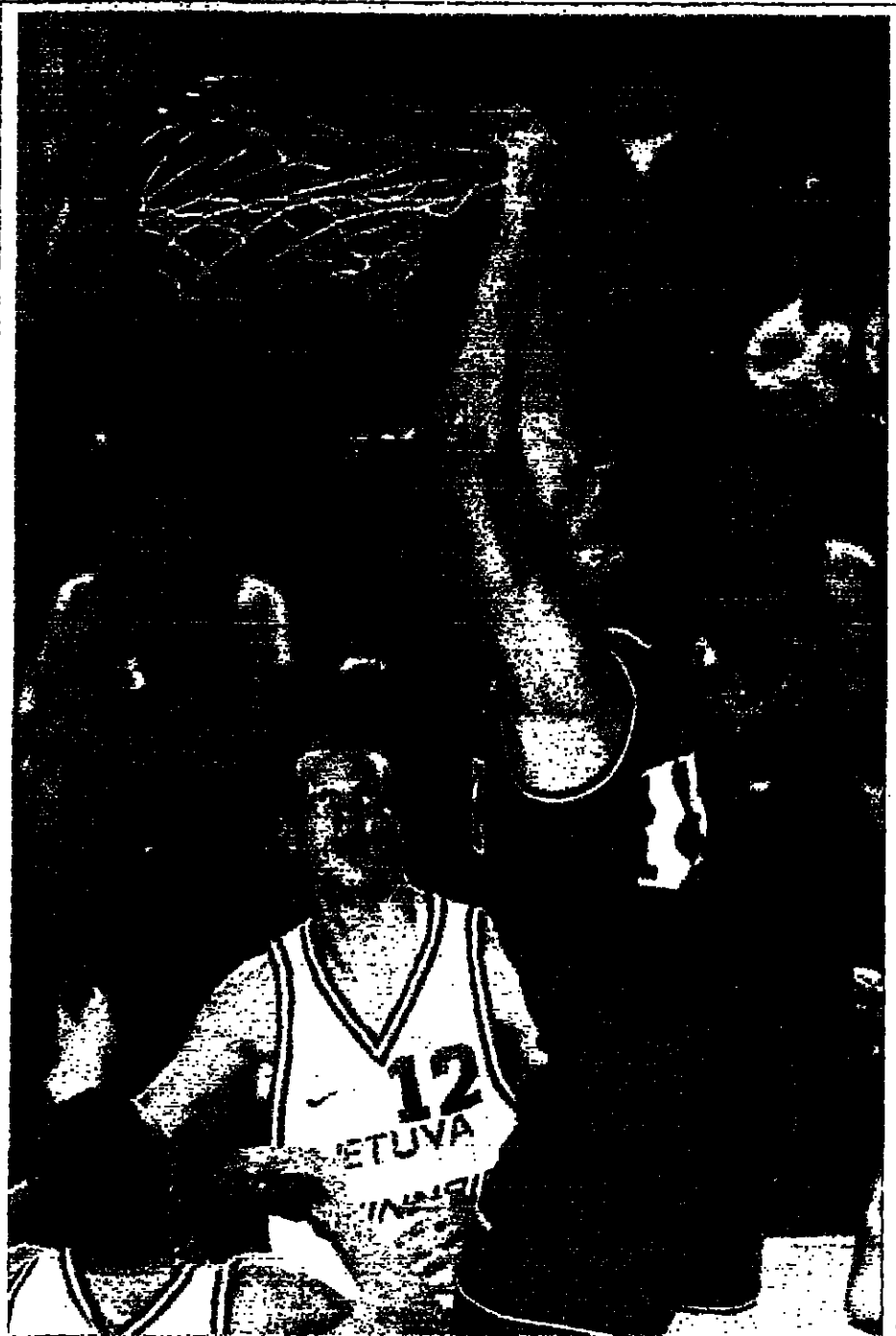
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Argentina's Leonardo Gutierrez (R) dunks the ball as Lithuanian Nerijus Karlikavicius stares during their match at the Youth World Basketball Championship for 'Under-22' in Melbourne. Argentina beat Lithuania 74-57 advancing to the semi-finals (Reuters photo)

Seles advances at Acura Classic

MANHATTAN BEACH, California (R) — Monica Seles showed flashes of her old World No. 1 form Thursday when she played nearly flawless tennis to crush Natasha Zvereva of Belarus in 43 minutes and gain the semifinals of the \$450,000 Acura Classic.

Seles, the second seed, struggled to a three-set triumph over France's Sandrine Testud Wednesday but was almost invincible from the start in her quarter-final match, riding a punishing ground attack to a 6-1 6-1 victory.

"It was just one of those nights where everything was going," said Seles, who held the top spot in the world rankings from 1991-93.

"Whatever I tried worked well — serve, return, moving well. It was just one of those nights that you wish you had more (of) and you try

to work hard so that you do have more."

Fifth-seeded Arantxa Sanchez Vicario of Spain, sixth seed Anke Huber of Germany and Nathalie Tauziat of France gained the quarter-finals.

Sanchez Vicario slipped past stubborn Ai Sugiyama of Japan 6-3 7-5. Huber beat Venus Williams 7-6 (7-4) 6-4. Tauziat outlasted eighth-seeded American Kimberly Po 7-6 (9-7) 4-6 6-4.

Seles also cruised past Zvereva in San Diego last week, but was more impressive here, committing just five unforced errors, while allowing Zvereva only 17 points — just seven in an opening set which lasted 18 minutes.

Seles awaits the winner of Friday's quarter-final clash between Sanchez Vicario and unseeded

American Amy Frazier.

The Spaniard captured her opening set against Sugiyama, then stumbled after racing to a 5-2 advantage in the second set. Sugiyama broke for 5-5 but Sanchez Vicario regrouped. She broke in the next game and survived four break points before claiming the win on her second match point.

"I always start well and get a little bit like I can't put the match away when I need to," she said. "But I concentrated very hard. This is a mental game."

Huber also had a brief mental lapse against the 17-year-old Williams but rallied to knock off her second teenager in as many matches this week after routing 16-year-old Russian Anna Kournikova Tuesday.

"It's just nice that you're still there," she said with a laugh. "It's hard to play against them. I'm really happy I beat Venus today. I'm just trying to go for one more."

Huber faces 16-year-old World No. 1 Martina Hingis in Friday night's Marquee matchup. Huber is 1-3 against the Swiss sensation.

"Most of the time I've had good matches," said Huber. "I haven't played her since she's No. 1. I'm looking forward to it."

Williams admitted her inexperience might have cost her the match. She committed 19 unforced errors.

"Anke played some good tennis," Williams said. "She made me make some errors and probably made me think I had to do more than I had to do."

Sampras struggles, Ivanisevic out in Ohio

MASON, Ohio (R) — Top-seeded Pete Sampras had a tough day against 16th-seeded Patrick Rafter of Australia before securing a 7-6 (7-4) 6-4 third-round victory at the ATP Championship Thursday.

"It was a little bit of luck," the World No. 1 said of his victory. "He was serving very, very well and holding serve pretty easy. It's one of those matches where I just got a little bit lucky and hung in there. It could have gone either way."

Dutchman Jan Siemerink, ranked 36th in the world, upended third-ranked, third-seeded Goran Ivanisevic of Croatia 6-4 6-4 in another third-round match between two southpaws.

Three French Open titlists — reigning champion Gustavo Kuerten of Brazil, 1995 Victor Thomas Muster of Austria and 1989 winner Michael Chang — struggled through three sets while jockeying for quarter-final berths.

Second-seeded Chang was tested for one hour, 40 minutes before winning a 3-6 6-1 6-4 third-round match over 21st-ranked Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev.

The fifth-seeded Muster needed one hour, 56 minutes to sideline 50th-ranked Martin Damm of the Czech Republic 6-3 3-6 7-5.

Kuerten, joining the top 10 for the first time this week in the 10th spot, was tested by U.S. qualifier Vince Spadea before taking a 6-7 (5-7) 6-3 6-4 third-round victory in two hours, nine minutes.

In the quarters, Sampras plays seventh-seeded Yevgeny Kafelnikov of Russia, Chang plays Kuerten, Muster plays Siemerink and sixth-seeded Sergi Bruguera of Spain plays 14th-seeded compatriot Albert Costa.

Sampras did not look nearly as invincible in his match against the 19th-ranked Rafter as he did against 88th-ranked Justin Gimelstob in the second round.

Sampras and Rafter each won 69 points in the one hour, 29 minute match.

One of the few serve-and-volleyers on the tour, Siemerink climbed all over Ivanisevic on both his first and second serves. Known for a big but frequently erratic serve, Ivanisevic was a cooperative victim, posting only a 48 percent first-serve efficiency.

"With Goran, you never know," Siemerink said. "I think he doesn't even know what's going to happen. With his big serve, you just have to concentrate on your own service game."

The fourth-ranked Muster made a career of his superb claycourt game but has become more adept on hardcourts recently, winning at Dubai and Key Biscayne earlier this year.

He was challenged until the end by Damm. On serve at 6-5 in the final set, Muster played a perfect game to break Damm at love and move into the quarter-finals.



Paris player Bruno N'Gotty (R) fights for the ball with Auxerre's Yann Lachuer during their French soccer championship match. PSG won 3-2 (Reuters photo)

Schumacher puts rivals in the shade

BUDAPEST (R) — Twice world champion Michael Schumacher of Germany pushed his rivals into the shade on Friday when he scorched to the fastest time in opening practice for Sunday's Hungarian Grand Prix.

Schumacher, driving a revised, lightweight Ferrari 310b, dominated the day, set the fastest time and then spun off the track in a late effort to improve his time on the slippery and dusty Hungaroring circuit north of Budapest.

With a 10-points lead in the world title race, he could afford to sit back, smile and watch from the sidelines in the closing minutes after proving that he and his much-improved Italian team are once again the outfit to beat.

As he did so, his title rival Jacques Villeneuve of Canada, in a Renault-powered Williams, laboured to find a competitive set-up and finished the opening day's practice down in 11th place, 1.3 seconds slower than Schumacher.

Briton David Coulthard was second-quickest in his improving Mercedes-Benz powered McLaren ahead of Italian Jarno Trulli in a Prost, German Heinz-Harald Frentzen in the leading Williams and, surprisingly, defending world champion Damon Hill who wound up fifth fastest in his Yamaha-powered Arrows after spending most of the afternoon session in the pits with a gearbox problem.

Hill recorded his best lap time in the final three minutes of the day's practice much to the embarrassment of the Benetton team. For them, Austrian Gerhard Berger, winner of the German Grand Prix only two weeks ago, was 13th and Frenchman Jean Alesi 15th, but less than two seconds separated Schumacher from the man in 17th place, Italian Gianni Morbidelli in a Sauber.

For Ferrari, it was further proof, with seven races remaining, that they are capable of clinching their



German Formula One driver Michael Schumacher drives his Ferrari during free practice at the Hungaroring, August 8 (Reuters photo)

first drivers' championship triumph since Jody Scheckter of South Africa won the title in 1979.

The team's sporting director Jean Todt said: "We knew that our chassis could be lighter so we worked to make it lighter and also to try and improve the technical level of the car."

"I think we achieved that and obtained a better weight distribution in the car. All this helps on the track. We may have gained only a little in time, maybe one or two-tenths of a second per lap, but this season especially it all helps."

Hill was delighted with his lap after a frustrating hour or more spent watching his mechanics at work. "They worked brilliantly as they

had to take the whole box off and put it together again. With five minutes to go there was no floor on the car," he said.

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Q. 1 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:	Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you bid:
47 CA 1063 OKJ AQJ9865	4854 A7849 OK AAJ7104
The bidding has proceeded:	The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST	SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST
1A Pass 2A Pass	1A Pass 2A Pass
2NT Pass 3 Pass	2 Pass 3 Pass
What do you bid now?	What do you bid now?
Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:	Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:
AKQ85 CAKQ83 Ovoid AK1076	41053 TAJ10 CA9632 482
The bidding has proceeded:	The bidding has proceeded:
SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST	NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1A Pass 2A Pass 3C	1A Pass 2A Pass
What do you bid now?	What do you bid now?
Q. 3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:	Q. 6 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:
AAQJ1063 682 OKJ7 448	476 TKJ4 KQJ104 AKQ9
The bidding has proceeded:	The bidding has proceeded:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST	NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1A Pass 2A Pass 3C	1A Pass 2A Pass
What do you bid now?	What do you bid now?

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TOMORROW AT CINEMA CONCORD

KARNI CROSSING, Gaza Strip (AFP) — Israeli officials accused Palestinians of spreading "misinformation" on Friday with reports that patients have died after being prevented from reaching medical treatment by the week-old closure on the Palestinian territories.

"Every day we have let through humanitarian cases. We have let pass 100 cases of ill patients and we have let enter 300 truckloads of essential supplies," said Colonel Dov Zatzka, head of the Israeli liaison office for the Gaza Strip.

Col. Zatzka said a report that five people had died because they were prevented from reaching treatment in Israel was "a lie and misinformation by the Palestinian [National] Authority. The Palestinian [National] Authority (PNA) is not cooperating in helping its own people," he told journalists at the Karni Crossing into the Gaza Strip.

Palestinian Health Minister Riyadh Zaanun told journalists on Thursday that five Palestinians had died in the Gaza Strip because the security closure imposed after last week's Jerusalem suicide bombing had prevented them from reaching medical treatment in Israel.

A human rights organisation also reported that a child, Jihad Jamil Abu Asba, had bled to death at an Israeli checkpoint outside the West Bank city of Hebron after he was injured in an accident and was prevented from crossing.

The soldiers "prevented the family from reaching the hospital and detained them at the checkpoint for several hours," the Palestinian Society for Protection of Human Rights and the Environment said.

An Israeli official said it was unclear if the child's death could be blamed on the checkpoint.

"By our information, the child was in a tractor accident and died on the spot. It's not confirmed that the soldiers held up such a car," said Shlomo Dror, spokesman for the West Bank coordination office.

"The Palestinians are blaming us for deaths we had nothing to do with. We're very angry about this because we are doing our best to let all humanitarian cases through," he said.

"There are orders to all the checkpoints to let ambulances and medical cases through and to let basic supplies such as fuel, food and medical supplies in," he said.

Israel imposed a punishing closure on the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the wake of a double suicide bombing which killed 15 people and injured more than 150 others in a Jerusalem marketplace on July 30.

On Friday, Israel lifted its blockade of two West Bank towns, Jericho and Nablus, and allowed Palestinians to cross the Allenby Bridge into Jordan.

But it maintained its internal seal preventing movement between other West bank cities and villages.

In recent days Israel has gradually eased certain of the sanctions, notably allowing some 13,000 labourers to reach jobs inside Jewish settlements and Israeli-controlled industrial zones in the territories.

But Mr. Netanyahu, rebuffing demands for moderation from the U.S., Jordan and Egypt, says the bulk of the sanctions will remain in place until the PNA takes concerted action against armed militants.

TEL AVIV (R) — A key aide to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was quoted Friday as saying he opposed Israel's "sucking up" to Arabs.

"Look, it's no secret that I do not like to chase after and suck up to the Arabs, including the Jordanians, including the Egyptians, including all of them," Avigdor Lieberman, director general of Mr. Netanyahu's office, told the newspaper Maariv.

"We have to protect our own honour. If something annoys me sometimes, it's that I feel humiliated, from the point of view of national honour, around this running after and this sucking up to the Arabs," he told the Israeli daily in an interview.

"We are not inferior to anyone in the Middle East."

The Russian-born Mr. Lieberman made the comments when asked why he made sure not to be around during the visit of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan to Israel Wednesday.

The Prince was on a mission to save Middle East peacemaking, battered by a suicide attack on an Israeli market that killed two bombers and 13 other people and by Israel's groundbreaking in March for a Jewish settlement in Arab east Jerusalem.

Mr. Lieberman said, for example, that while Israeli officials crowded Egypt's embassy to celebrate the Egyptian independence day, Egyptians would not do the same on Israel's national day.

Egypt and Jordan are the only Arab states to have peace treaties with Israel.

The burly Lieberman said that he was proud of his right-wing credentials and that he had no disagreements with Mr. Netanyahu.

"I've already said a number of times that right of me is only a wall... I am here, among other things, because our red line is shared. The prime minister set it and it is acceptable to me," Mr. Lieberman said.

TEL AVIV (AP) — Salah Tarif, an Israeli member of parliament and reserve officer in the Israeli army, set off to Damascus on Thursday, excited about the prospect of meeting Syrian President Hafez Assad.

"This is the first time an Israeli army officer will shake hands with the Syrian president," Mr. Tarif said before leaving for the eight-day visit.

Mr. Tarif is part of a 48-member Israeli Arab delegation invited to Damascus by Mr. Assad. The delegation includes seven members of Israel's parliament, local Arab council heads, and journalists.

Peace talks between Israel and Syria broke down in early 1996 after Syria refused to condemn a series of suicide attacks in Israel. They have shown little sign of resuming under the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who opposes returning the Golan Heights to Syria.

"As Arabs and Israelis we feel we may be the best mediators between Israel and its Arab neighbours," Walid Tzaadek, a member of parliament from the mainstream opposition Meretz Party, told Israel's army radio Thursday.

"In the current state of political deadlock our visit is a big step for Israel and very encouraging," Mr. Tarif said. "We are standing up against the nonsense and slogans of Netanyahu's government, and we are saying to the Syrians that there are those who want peace and that they should not despair."

The group will meet with Mr. Assad, Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa, and other senior officials, as well as leaders of opposition Palestinian groups.

According to Israeli daily Ma'ariv the group will also visit the Al Yarmouk refugee camp, where some 100,000 of Syria's estimated 350,000 Palestinian refugees live.

Israeli government spokesman Moshe Fogel said the government supported the delegation, even if it did not agree with all its views.

"They certainly have our blessing," he said. "We're for open contacts and dialogue with the Syrian government — the more the better."

DUBAI (R) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) will boycott a controversial economic summit in Qatar this year which Israel was expected to attend, UAE President Sheikh Zaid Ben Sultan Al Nahayan said in remarks published on Friday.

"Sheikh Zaid was asked whether the UAE would participate in the economic summit in Doha and he said he had decided not to participate," Arabic daily Al Hayat said, summarising an interview with the UAE president in London.

Sheikh Zaid said many Arab countries — including Syria, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and the Palestinians — opposed the meeting with Israel under the current circumstances.

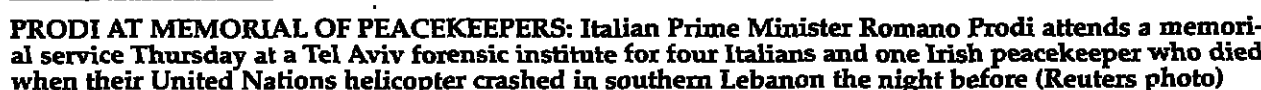
"If we object to something we should object together. And if we approve we should approve together," said Sheikh Zaid, who is on a private visit to Britain.

"We cannot satisfy one country and disregard the others,"

Qatar's Emir Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani said last month he was determined to convene the showpiece Middle East and North Africa Economic meeting (MENA) in November.

Israel traditionally attends the annual summit, which was launched in 1994 and was held last year in Egypt. Some Arab states have threatened to boycott the Doha summit over the deadlocked Middle East peace process.

Sheikh Zaid said his country nonetheless supported Qatar, saying that whatever harmed Qatar harmed all Arabs.



BAGHDAD (AFP) — President Saddam Hussein called Friday on Iran's new leader to back up his promise of improved foreign relations with concrete action to mend ties with Iraq.

In a televised address to mark the anniversary of the end of the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war, President Hussein called on Tehran to exchange its policy of "expansion, interference and deceit" with one of "cooperation" with Iraq.

"We are not content to hear from present Iranian officials words without deeds," Mr. Hussein said, promising reciprocal Iraqi action to any Iranian gesture.

"We will not be content to see Iran merely changing poses and replacing an individual with another," he added, in a reference to Iran's moderate new President Mohammad Khatami.

After taking the oath of office on Monday, the 54-year-old Iranian president called for "a dialogue between civilisations and détente in our relations with the outside world."

Iran and Iraq have vet to

sign a peace treaty, a full nine years since an August 1988 ceasefire brokered by the United Nations that ended their eight-year war.

Ties are still strained by the issue of prisoners of war and missing persons from the conflict as well as Iraqi planes sent for shelter in Iran during the 1991 Gulf war, while Iraq also serves as the base of Iran's main armed opposition group, the People's Mujahadeen.

Mr. Hussein, dressed in civilian clothes, called on Iranian leaders to "fulfil their commitments" during his speech which lasted for close to an hour and a half.

Foremost among these, he said, are the "release of Iraqi PoWs and the return of Iraqi possessions including civilian and military aircraft which were transferred to Iran" during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis.

He pledged, "every step taken by Iran on this basis will be met on our part with two balanced steps, the first responds to theirs and the second reflects the concern of stability and security in the region and mutual respect and balanced interests."

Mr. Hussein accused Tehran of holding 20,000 Iraqi prisoners of war and said Baghdad had released all but one of its 39,000 Iranian prisoners in 1990.

He said Iraq is holding only a pilot shot down on September 18, "to prove Tehran "attacked targets within our territories" before the outbreak of war four days later.

Iran, for its part, says Iraq is still holding 5,000 PoWs and has not given figures on the number of Iraqis in its jails.

Iraq also demands the return of what it says are 115 military planes and 33 other aircraft sent to Iran just before the Gulf war to escape bombing raids by the United States and its allies.

Iran says it only has 22 Iraqi planes and will hand them back if the United Nations so demands.

Mr. Hussein also renewed Iraqi accusations that Iran seeks to export its Islamic revolution abroad and said that would have to change if it wanted to mend fences with Arab countries.

Iranian officials must not "mix their political and economic relations with the

Arabs and Iraq with the desire to realise religious slogans with the aim of expanding at the expense of Arabs," Mr. Hussein said.

"Going into conflict with the Arabs is costly," he said.

Iraqi state television and radio played patriotic songs to mark Friday's ninth anniversary of the war, which left hundreds of thousands dead, while newspapers hailed the "victorious battles" in red banner headlines.

At dawn, cannons fired a 101-gun salute in Baghdad and other cities to herald the anniversary.

Iraqi state newspapers voiced scepticism Thursday that Iran's foreign policy would change under Mr. Khatami.

The daily Al Thawra, organ of the ruling Baath Party, said in its headline: "A new president but old methods." He was not "the master of his decisions, especially when it comes to foreign policy," it said.

Iran's hardline paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has the final word on all political and religious decisions.

ADELAIDE, Australia (AFP) — A judge here ruled Friday that the brother of an Australian nurse murdered in Saudi Arabia had no legal right to call for the execution of two women accused of killing her.

Acting South Australian supreme court Justice Len King granted injunctions sought by a lawyer acting for two British nurses charged with 55-year-old Yvonne Gilford's murder in Saudi Arabia in December.

Judge King put a restraining order on Yvonne's brother Frank which bars him from repeating his call for the nurses to be executed — possibly by public beheading — if found guilty.

But local experts said the mother Muriel Gilford — who lives in south Australia — was mentally incapable of calling for the death penalty because she was suffering from Alzheimer's disease.

This disease is characterised by memory loss and progressive intellectual impairment.

The Gilfords' lawyer Michael Boylan said the request for the injunctions aimed to interfere in the Saudi proceedings and was therefore an abuse of legal process.

Judge King ruled that Frank Gilford, or his solicitors, should inform the Saudi court there was a serious issue to answer as to the mental competency of Ms. Muriel Gilford.

TEHRAN (AP) — U.S. Trade sanctions on Iran are no more than "the buzz of a mosquito passing by our ears," Iran's former president, Hashemi Rafsanjani, said Friday.

Mr. Rafsanjani, who stepped down Monday after two, four-year terms, said the sanctions showed America's hostility toward the Islamic Republic and were merely an attempt to intimidate it.

"This is a demonstration of the hostile nature of the Americans toward Iran," Mr. Rafsanjani said in a sermon on the Muslim Sabbath.

In 1996, President Bill Clinton signed a law authorizing the U.S. to penalize U.S. and foreign companies that invest more than \$40 million a year in oil and gas sectors in Iran and Libya. The U.S. accuses both of sponsoring terrorism and reduced the threshold to \$20 million last week.

Iran has said the sanctions legislation had little effect.

"As far as we are concerned, it was just like the buzz of a mosquito passing by our ears," he said.

Although no longer president, Mr. Rafsanjani, 63, remains influential as head of Iran's Expediency Council, a body that advises the government on policy-making.

He also suggested that the U.S. was behind Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait to provide an opportunity to sell arms in the region.

Washington's insistence that the region remains insecure is a pretext for its military presence in the oil-rich Gulf, he said.

Iran has often expressed reservations over the U.S. presence.

About 20,000 U.S. troops are stationed in the Gulf, many on warships patrolling Gulf waters.

U.S.-Iran relations have remained troubled since the 1979 Iranian Revolution.

HANOVER (AFP) — A mother has won a legal battle to name her son Godot after waiting more than a year for permission from the courts. A court here, in a ruling 395 days after the child was born, ruled that a city official was wrong to refuse to add the name Godot to the baby's other names, Max and Geronimo, on the birth certificate. It overturned a ruling by a lower court in this central German city which had argued that Godot was not a first name but "a fantastical literary name."

COLOMBO (R) — The speaker of Sri Lanka's parliament on Friday warned lawmakers that he would confiscate their mobile telephones if he found them being used in the chamber. The warning came when a lawmaker's mobile phone rang, briefly interrupting parliamentary proceedings. "I have warned you several times that cellular telephones should not be brought into the chambers. In future if they [telephones] are used, I reluctantly will have to confiscate them," Kiri Banda Ramayake told parliamentarians.

TOKYO (AFP) — Masked robbers attacked security van guards north of Tokyo Friday and got away with three cash boxes containing \$1.8 million, police said. Two or three assailants pounced on a pair of guards who were about to unload the cash boxes from the van and place them in a safe at an agricultural cooperative, police officials said. They blindfolded two security guards and bludgeoned one with a blunt weapon during the early morning raid in Ibaraki Prefecture, police said.

LONDON (R) — More Russian men appear to be drinking themselves to an early grave since communism collapsed, researchers reported on Friday. Russian and British researchers working together found alarmingly high mortality rates in Russian men coincided with a sharp rise in alcohol consumption. David Leon of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, working with colleagues at the centre of Demography and Human Ecology in Moscow, did a careful study of Russian death rates.

TOKYO (R) — From September, Japanese parents will no longer have to shout when they want their children to come in for dinner — they can page them. NTT Mobile Communications Network Inc. (NTT DOCOMO) said it will introduce an inexpensive paging service for communications between parents and children.

HONG KONG (R) — Thousands of Batman fans were devastated when rain turned a Hong Kong ice rink into a swimming pool, forcing the cancellation of a "Batman On Ice" show. Organisers sent home more than 4,000 spectators having failed to get the temporary ice rink ready after a downpour inundated the venue in Hong Kong's Victoria Park on Thursday night. The stage area looked like a swimming pool, said Dale Tennie of the Australian Entertainment Company.

Rights group calls for restrictions on Palestinians on sale

Page 22 Number 6615
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